DAILY NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

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My extraordinary day with Dolly Parton

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Meta to pay $18bn in 'child harm' case

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Britons lost in Nepal flood

● Raging waters kill at least 160 people around Tibet border ● Dozens of UK citizens among the hundreds missing

Dewan Rai Kathmandu
Rhys Blakely Science Editor
David Brown Chief News Correspondent

Dozens of British tourists were feared dead last night after devastating flash floods and mudslides swept along Nepal's border with Tibet.

The torrent of water and debris from the Bhote Koshi river destroyed buildings, roads and bridges in the Himalayas north of Kathmandu early yesterday.

At least 160 people were killed and more than 650 were missing. Thirty-three British citizens were among the foreigners unaccounted for, according to the Nepal Tourism Board. Police said 579 tourists were missing.

Video showed people running for their lives as the wall of water approached. Initial reports suggested the surge was caused by the collapse of part of a glacier in Tibet.

Alpine Eco Trek, a tour operator, said a 13-year-old girl and a tourist aged 65 were among the 33 missing British citizens who were on a nine-day tour to Mount Kailash. The site is revered in Hinduism and Buddhism.

Ram Kumar Adhikari, a manager for Alpine Eco Trek, said that the group had been crossing into Tibet, an autonomous region of China, from Nepal when the travellers became trapped at the border. Four of its local tour guides were also missing.

Adhikari said: "The group leader and guide were in constant contact with us and told us that the team had reached the Chinese immigration office at 7am.

"Our group leader and guide remained online until 8.40am, so we assumed they had crossed immigration. There is no internet access on the Chinese side, so we had no reason to be immediately concerned.

"Then we received news of the massive flood. Initially, it was reported that the flooding had affected only the Nepal side.

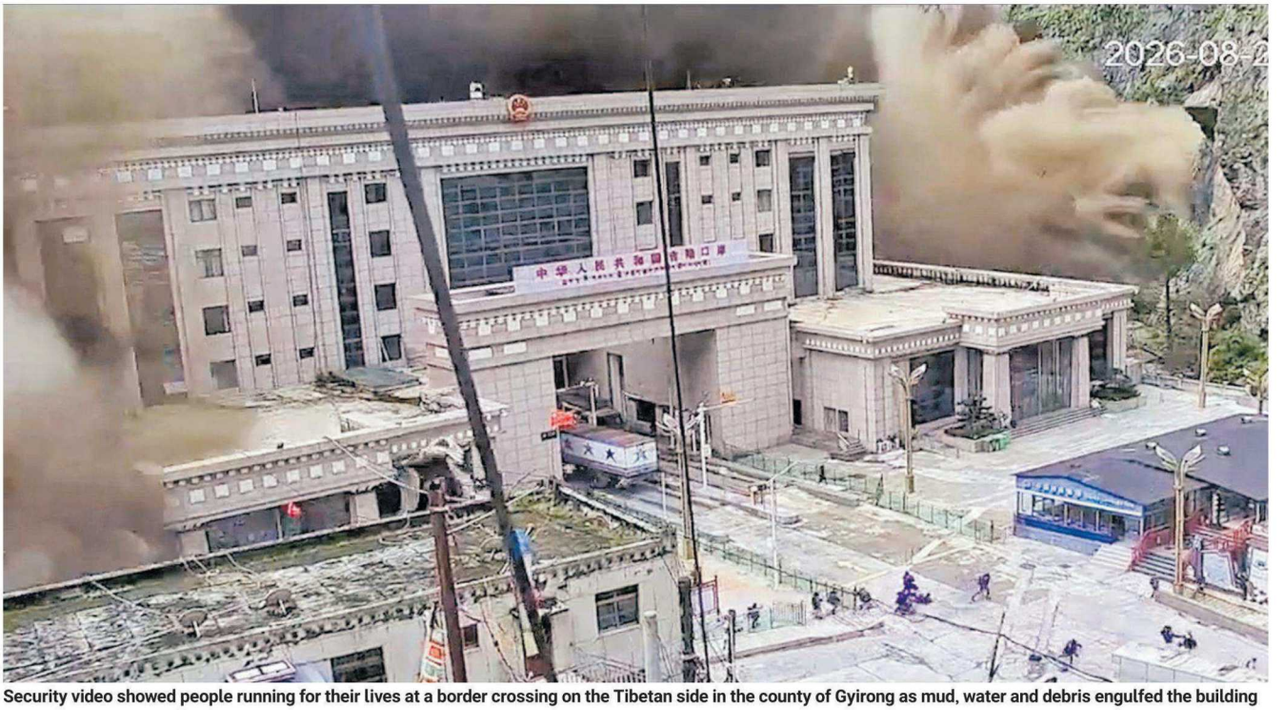
"Chinese authorities later released video showing a huge surge of water sweeping away the Chinese immigration building and bridges.

"You can see people running in the footage, and some of them could be members of our group."

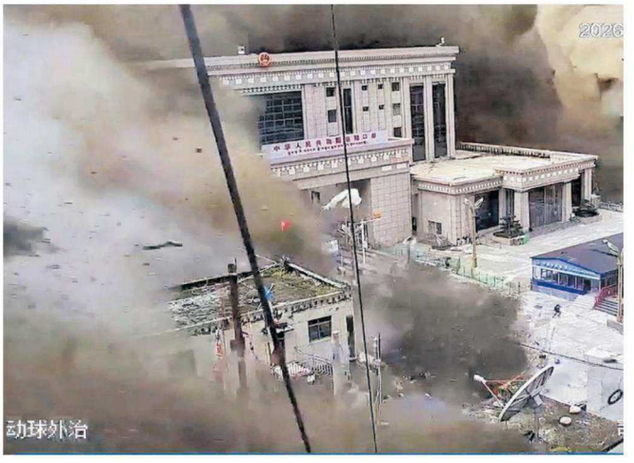
Among the missing Britons on the Alpine Eco Trek tour were three men aged 52, 64 and 65, and seven women aged 44, 47, 51, 60, two aged 63, and 65, according to travel logs.

Video from the Gyirong Port crossing showed dozens of people running in terror seconds before the water and mud crashed into the building.

CCTV, the Chinese state broadcaster, said a mudslide in the region near the Tibetan border killed at least three people and left 265 missing. Reports of an earthquake were later attributed to a landslide.



Security video showed people running for their lives at a border crossing on the Tibetan side in the county of Gyirong as mud, water and debris engulfed the building



Climate experts at the Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development said an avalanche from a glacier probably caused the flash flood.

The US Geological Survey said a landslide preceded the flash flooding in Nepal and there was no earthquake. It said: "This event was initially reported as a magnitude 4.4 earthquake. Additional analysis of long-period seismic waves indicates that the seismic energy was instead generated by a landslide."

The local authorities warned of the risk of a second flood as a blockage was still lodged upstream on the Lhende Khola river. Alerts have been issued in the Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Several rivers flow down the Himalayas into their plains.

David Fisher, the Nepal head of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, said: "Entire villages and market areas have been wiped out. The priority now is to reach affected communities and get assistance to people who have lost their homes, suffered injuries or have been cut off."

Andy Burnham, the prime minister, said: "These scenes emerging from along the Nepal-China border are devastating. My thoughts are with all those affected, including the families and loved ones of British nationals missing in this tragedy."

The Foreign Office said it was "deeply saddened by the loss of life and devastation caused by the floods in Nepal".

It said British citizens in Nepal should

Continued on page 5

News

Today's highlights

7am **Pat McFadden**, work and pensions secretary
10.30am **Anthony Seldon** discusses his latest political biography, *Sunak at 10: The Last Conservative Prime Minister?*
1.40pm **David Cay Johnston**, author of *The Making of Donald Trump*
3.35pm **Kate Atkinson**, right, on her latest novel *Our Noble Selves*
5.50pm **Luke Tryl**, executive director of the polling company More in Common

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TODAY'S EDITION

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From Harry and Meghan to peace in Ukraine: our monthly Q&A

The Story

Does the King decide where his grandchildren go to school? Could we build data centres underground? And why was the CIA chief (reportedly) in Moscow? You asked, so we answered in this edition of our question and answer series.

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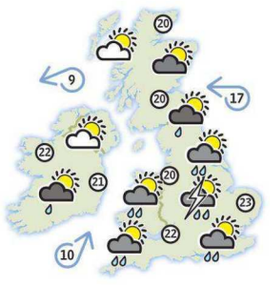
THE WEATHER



Largely dry and sunny in the northwest, heavy and thundery rain elsewhere. **Full forecast, page 53**

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US labels Palestine Action as a 'violent' global terror group

Max Kendix Washington Correspondent

Palestine Action has been designated as a global terrorist organisation by the United States, a move that freezes any assets it holds in the country and bans its supporters from entering.

The Trump administration said the group "has supported numerous acts of terrorism since July 2020, including acts that have physically injured UK law enforcement personnel, as well as acts intended to intimidate lawful commercial enterprises and coerce the UK government".

Britain proscribed Palestine Action as a terrorist organisation last year. More than 3,000 people have been arrested for showing support for the organisation since the ban.

Yesterday the US Treasury's office of foreign assets labelled Palestine Action a "specially designated global terrorist". It joins a list of groups that include Hamas, al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.

An announcement on the department's website said: "The group's actions include multiple high-profile instances of breaking into defence infrastructure and British military installations, and causing millions of dollars' worth of damage to military equipment.

"Palestine Action has promoted its violent, criminal and terrorist acts on social media, encouraging the use of similar tactics internationally, including within the United States and along the US-Mexican border."

The designation, which the US said "complements the UK's proscription", bans Americans from being involved with the group, including by giving any funds, goods or services to Palestine Action. Britons involved in the organisation, potentially including the thousands of protesters who were arrested for supporting it, risk visa bans and financial sanctions.

The power of the US financial system could make it difficult for these individuals to open bank accounts or get a mortgage.

The group formerly had an American branch, Palestine Action US, which had a similar goal of disrupting and vandalising companies connected to Israel. It rebranded as Unity of Fields in 2024, and has gone on to help fuel protests in Los Angeles and celebrate attacks on police.

Palestine Action's designation in the US comes after a drive by Marco Rubio, the US secretary of state, to crack down on hard-left extremist groups. Scott Bessent, the Treasury secretary, said yesterday: "Far-left extremists, their fronts and their enablers should be on notice: we will bring the full weight of our economic tools to bear.

"Political terrorism has no place in our society, and we will continue to cut the financial lifelines of these groups until they are eliminated."

Bessent also announced the proscription of Autistici/Inventati, an Italy-based organisation which is accused of providing tech services to violent groups.

The UK's proscription was struck down by the High Court in February, but overturned in the Court of Appeal in June. The ban remains active while it is appealed at the Supreme Court.

Huda Ammori, Palestine Action's co-founder, said that the organisation's activities had "always been about saving lives by disrupting the Israeli war machine" and called on Andy Burnham to "take action to protect British citizens in the US who are now at risk of political persecution".

She added: "The fact that Trump is now taking inspiration from Britain's repression of the movement for Palestinian freedom exposes just how dangerous this ban is and should be a wake-up call to anyone who cares about free speech and democracy."

UK sanctions on Israel 'risk trade war'

Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent

Andy Burnham has been warned he risks igniting a trade war with President Trump over plans to impose sanctions on Israeli settlements.

Labour MPs told the prime minister Britain could face retaliation from the White House for imposing a trade ban in response to plans for 1,200 settler homes in the West Bank.

Burnham is preparing to announce "robust" sanctions on Israel for its E1 expansion plan, backed by at least 140 Labour MPs who want the package to go further than any other European country by covering services as well as goods. However, others in the party warned that Trump could levy tariffs on Britain in retaliation.

One Labour MP said: "Our trade and diplomatic relationship with the US is fragile enough as it is. We shouldn't be naive enough to believe we could sanction Israel and not face any economic and political consequences from the White House, Congress or states with [anti-boycott, divestment and sanctions] laws."

A former Labour minister added: "Our ministers need to weigh these risks very carefully before going ahead with gestures that might make their backbenchers and some voters feel better but would not improve the plight of the Palestinians anyway."

Federal law in the United States allows for penalties including fines and imprisonment to be imposed on companies that participate in or support another government's Israeli boycott.

The US embassy in Ireland last month said the recently passed Israeli settlements bill "risks real unintended consequences, particularly for nearly 1,000 US companies and the hundreds of thousands of Irish jobs tied to them".

However, Burnham wants to strengthen the UK's approach after Israel announced plans to open tenders for the construction of a settlement known as E1 in east Jerusalem. The name comes from "East 1", an Israeli planning designation.

Ed Miliband, the foreign secretary, called the Israeli move a "destructive act" that would "endanger the viability of a two-state solution".

More than a third of the parliamentary party have backed a trade ban and some are pushing for it to include sanctions on any companies awarded contracts for the E1 project.

Andrew Pakes is among the Labour MPs pushing for a swift sanctions package. He told Times Radio yesterday: "If not now, when? The moral imperative here [is] to keep alive the idea of a two-state solution."

The issue threatens to overshadow Burnham's first meeting with Trump, which could come at the UN general assembly in New York next month.

Burnham's plan to sanction Israeli settlements, letters, page 26
Sanctions are a self-serving gambit, leading article, page 27

Ex-police chief investigated over club ban

David Woode Crime Editor
Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

The former chief constable of West Midlands police is being investigated for gross misconduct over his role in banning supporters of an Israeli football club from a match.

Maccabi Tel Aviv fans were barred from travelling to a Europa League game against Aston Villa at Villa Park on November 6 last year.

A review by the policing inspectorate found that West Midlands police used "exaggerated and untrue" evidence to justify excluding the fans. It identified eight inaccuracies in a report from the force to a local safety advisory group (SAG), including one reference to a non-existent fixture between West Ham and Maccabi Tel Aviv.

Craig Guildford denied that his officers used artificial intelligence to generate information for a report supporting the ban on Israeli fans. However, he told MPs they had used Google, which has AI features.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) began investigating in January as Guildford retired from his £220,800-a-year post after Shabana Mahmood, the home secretary, withdrew confidence in his leadership.

Investigators said they had examined 600 pieces of evidence that "indicates" Guildford "may have had oversight on an intelligence briefing" presented to the SAG. The IOPC yesterday said Guildford was being investigated over claims he failed to ensure due diligence over the document.

A serving senior officer and a staff member have also been served with gross misconduct notices over the mistakes. Meanwhile, two other officers who helped plan for the game face accusations of potential misconduct. Derrick Campbell, the IOPC director of engagement, said: "Our investigation has been to assess whether there is an indication anyone may have breached one or more of the standards of police professional behaviour.

"There is an indication some people serving with the police may potentially have behaved in a manner that could justify disciplinary proceedings."

Each of the serving and former officers and staff have been told their conduct will be investigated.

A spokesperson for Simon Foster, the police and crime commissioner for the West Midlands, said: "The commissioner is unable to comment further because the IOPC investigation is live."

Last month it emerged that Guildford had been handed a £57,800 "golden goodbye" as compensation for "loss of office".

SAMIR HUSSEIN/GETTY IMAGES; SWNS

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex in London in 2020, the year they left Britain. Top, the jet said to have brought them home

Private jet 'flies Harry and Meghan back to UK'

Lara Wildenberg

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex arrived back in Britain yesterday, according to reports.

Prince Harry, Meghan and their two children are believed to have flown in privately from California. The BBC and The Telegraph reported that they arrived at Birmingham airport at lunchtime. A spokesman for the Sussexes declined to comment on their whereabouts due to privacy and security concerns.

Flightradar24, the live flight tracker, showed that a Bombardier Global Express, a luxury long-range business jet, landed at Birmingham airport at 11.57am after departing Van Nuys airport in California.

The Daily Mail reported that the Sussexes had chartered the jet from Planet Nine Private Air, a California-based private aircraft operator, which is believed to cost about $12,000 (£9,000) per hour of flight time. A photo of the plane on the tarmac resembles a jet on the Planet Nine website, which flies for 12 hours, seats 13 and sleeps six.

It is understood the Sussexes are waiting on a fresh assessment of their security needs after losing their automatic right to armed police protection when they stepped down as working royals. In the meantime, Harry's security adviser and friend David Langdown is understood to have established a team of British security staff, The Sunday Times reported.

Yesterday, a source told the BBC there did not appear to be a police presence as Harry and his family left the airport. The Telegraph reported that the Sussexes were being supported by their own protection team, and were met by a van and two blacked-out cars.

The Sussexes announced their plans for a surprise return only a week ago. They moved to the US having stepped down from royal duties in 2020, and in the past six years have made numerous claims about the royal family in interviews, Harry's autobiography, *Spare*, and their Netflix series.

Their children, Archie, seven, and Lilibet, five, have enrolled in a British school. It is not known how long the Sussexes will stay in the UK. A source told The Sunday Times that the "international couple" would stay for "an extended period of time", which could be as little as six months or longer than a year. The couple will retain their homes in Montecito and Portugal.

In the UK, the family will live at a private, non-royal residence thought to be outside London. There have been reports they could move to the Cotswolds, where they briefly rented in 2018, or stay near Harry's maternal family at Althorp, the Spencer family estate in Northamptonshire.

Harry and Meghan will remain as private individuals. He will work on the Invictus Games, which will be hosted in Birmingham next year, while she will run her lifestyle brand As Ever.

Cost to mothball Sussexes' US home

Lara Wildenberg

Prince Harry will have to pay as much as $600,000 (£442,000) a year to maintain his Montecito property, according to estimates.

It is understood the Duke and Duchess of Sussex will keep their nine-bedroom Mediterranean-style mansion after they move to the UK this week. Calculations on their mortgage bill and taxes have raised questions over how the couple will maintain the property, in addition to a private residence in the UK and holiday home in Portugal.

The Montecito property, known as the Chateau of Riven Rock, lies in seven acres among a wealthy enclave east of Santa Barbara, nicknamed the American Riviera.

Outside, it boasts rose gardens, a swimming pool and tennis court. Inside the rooms have a small cinema, sauna and a gym. According to Santa Barbara County records, the Sussexes' company, Rockbridge, bought the estate for $14.65 million on June 9, 2020.

The swimming pool at the Montecito property seems to have been covered

The deed shows the company then took out a $9.52 million loan, with an adjustable-rate mortgage starting at 2.49 per cent. Based on a 30-year term, the Sussexes would be subject to a monthly repayment of $37,566, equating to $450,792 a year.

The New York Post reported the couple paid a property tax bill of $149,668 last year, a figure that had increased each year. Even if their tax bill remains the same, the Sussexes will pay an estimated $600,460 in mortgage and tax this year, before any insurance, maintenance and staffing costs.

The Sussexes will also retain their home in Portugal, which they reportedly bought for £6.3 million in 2023. In the UK, it is understood the King will not provide the Sussexes with accommodation and that the family will move to a private, non-royal residence thought to be in the Cotswolds area.

As well as the expense of maintaining three homes, Harry has been ordered to pay millions in legal costs relating to his failed privacy case against the publisher of the Daily Mail.

King and Queen will tour the Caribbean for summit

Lara Wildenberg

The King and Queen will go on an autumn tour to the Caribbean to celebrate the "Commonwealth family".

They will visit the twin-island nation of Antigua and Barbuda for the 2026 Commonwealth heads of government meeting. The 28th edition of the summit will bring together leaders from the 56 Commonwealth countries between November 1 and 4.

Before this, Charles will visit the Bahamas, where he is head of state, and then undertake a state visit to Guyana. The visit will mark 60 years of bilateral relations with Guyana, on the northern coast of South America.

The King, then the Prince of Wales, visited Antigua and Barbuda in November 2017 after two hurricanes.

Antigua and Barbuda was colonised by English settlers in the 1600s and became an associated state of the UK — with internal autonomy — in 1967. It became independent in 1981 and obtained Commonwealth membership.

After the death of Queen Elizabeth II in 2022, Antigua and Barbuda's prime minister, Gaston Browne, promised a referendum within three years on whether the country should become a republic. Although no vote has occurred, the parliament approved a constitutional amendment formally removing loyalty to the British monarch from its oath of allegiance.

In May, the new cabinet swore an oath of allegiance to the state of Antigua and Barbuda.

News Nepal floods

Victims swept away by waters

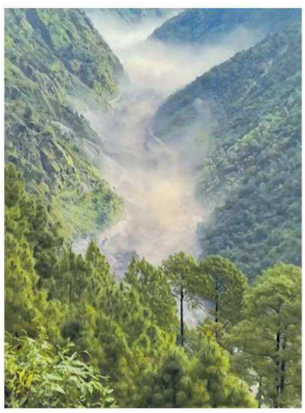
Dewan Rai Kathmandu

Hours after what looked likely to be among the worst Himalayan floods in memory, geologists were still trying to work out the cause. The sole certainty was that the death toll — which had hit 160 last night — would rise.

At 8.37am local time yesterday there were initial reports of a 4.4-magnitude earthquake striking Tibet, near the Nepalese border. This was neither unusual, nor that worrying. But what came after was.

Early reports from the Nepalese government suggested an avalanche was triggered, which may have first blocked the Lhende River, a tributary of the Bhote Koshi, before releasing the backed-up water in a sudden flood. The US Geological Survey later said that a landslide preceded the flash flooding, and there was no earthquake.

There was no doubt about the consequences: the waters hit like an inland



Water gushed along the Bhote Koshi River. Rajan Shrestha, the mayor of Bidur, fears as many as 400 of his townsfolk were swept to their deaths

tsunami. Downstream of the border post, the deluge thundered through villages, washing away houses, cars and people. It funnelled through steep Himalayan valleys, tearing apart dams and power plants. For 20 miles and beyond, concrete bridges were shattered, farms destroyed — and those who could not get to high ground were swept along with it all. The water moved so fast that the flood warning system was barely able to keep up.

Rajan Shrestha, the mayor of Bidur, said it had been a sunny morning. Then at 9am he received an urgent flood alert from the district's disaster-preparedness centre. He immediately passed the message on — but had not expected the flood to arrive with such force.

"I had never seen such a massive flood in my life," Shrestha said. "And it came so fast. We could not evacuate all the people from the main town." He estimated that about 400 people may have been swept away.

Yasoda Nepal, 42, a teacher whose village of Tupche sits on a hillside above the river, had just reached her secondary school when she received the flood alert. After helping to evacuate the children, she rushed home to rescue her 93-year-old grandmother.

She barely managed to do so before the flood inundated her house up to the second floor. The building remained standing only because a larger house in the path of the current absorbed much of the force. "The flood came like a slap in the face," she said. "It came at lightning speed and took everything with it."

Her uncle, Nawaraj Nepal, 56, went to the cattle shed to untie his buffalo and never returned.

"Floods come and go, and we are familiar with them," she said. "But we had never, ever imagined a flood of this magnitude in our lives. It was not even in our wildest imagination."

In a hydroelectric power plant, being built further along the river, 60 people were unaccounted for, including 35 workers who had been inside a tunnel.

Thirty-three British citizens were among 466 missing tourists, police said.

Rescue attempts have been complicated by a loss of power and communications after the flood waters knocked out roads, telegraph lines and electricity. Those seeking survivors know that for every lucky escape there would be many tragedies yet to discover, and perhaps still to come.

Ice falling from glacier may have led to deluge

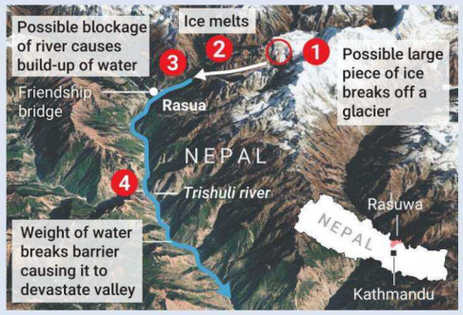
Analysis

The flooding in Nepal was most likely caused by ice falling off a glacier, according to an initial assessment by scientists (Adam Vaughan writes).

Contradictory accounts of the disaster's cause emerged, along with shocking video footage of fast-moving floodwater sweeping through a Himalayan valley and washing away bridges and roads.

Initial reports suggested it may have been caused by a glacial lake in the mountains above bursting, which has become more common because of climate change in recent decades. However, researchers now think that unlikely.

Heavy rainfall does not appear to have been behind the event, as there was relatively little precipitation in the run-up to the floods.



The Nepali foreign minister said he thought the floods may have been triggered by an avalanche, caused by an earthquake.

But Dr Simon Cook, an environmental scientist at the University of Dundee, said analysis by his seismologist colleagues suggested the 4.4 magnitude shock

that came 'at lightning speed'

PRABIN RANABHAT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; NAVESH CHITRAKAR/REUTERS; NIRANJAN SHRESTHA/AP

Buildings in the Nuwakot district of Nepal were swamped with mud; rescue efforts included the use of bulldozers to reach those in damaged properties. Satellite imagery shows the Nepal-China border before and after the flash flooding

registered by the US Geological Survey was likely to have been caused by falling debris from the avalanche, rather than an earthquake itself.

Cook, who is working with other UK, US and European researchers to establish the cause of the disaster, said initial signs indicated a collapsing glacier was to blame.

Satellite imagery shows that a portion of a glacier broke off and plummeted about 1,200 to 1,300 metres into the valley. During the fall, much of the ice and debris in the avalanche would have been pulverised and fragmented. Cook said a similar landslide occurred in a Himalayan flood in 2021. "We think this is a much bigger event," he said of the avalanche in Nepal yesterday. "It's unlike anything we've seen before."

Exactly how the avalanche then led to flooding in the valley below remains unclear. However, experts think it may have been caused by falling debris temporarily blocking a river, damming up water behind it until the barrier broke.

"It's not a location like the Thames where it's very flat next to the river. It's a steep valley so the barrier would produce a big lake behind it," said Liz Stephens, professor in climate risks and resilience at the University of Reading.

She said it was likely the barrier had broken, leading water to move at very high speeds with lots of debris in it, making it especially damaging.

Cook said a fellow researcher at the University of Grenoble in France had calculated the water could have been moving as fast as 50 metres per second.

"That's very quick. It would have been a matter of minutes from that ice avalanche happening to it hitting that border post," he said. "It's unlikely an early warning system would have been able to help in time." Cook said global warming, which studies have previously found has been making the Himalayas more unstable, may have contributed.

"My strong suspicion is that climate change had a role, but we can't say for sure," he said.

Sarah Boulton, professor of geohazards at the University of Plymouth, said the strength of the tremor suggested it may yet be found to have been an earthquake that caused a mountain slope to fail.

"Understanding exactly how this happened will occur in the next days and weeks," she said.

Husband flies to Nepal in search of missing wife

Ed Halford

For Leena Bhupesh Bector, seeing the majestic and towering Tibetan Himalayas up close would be part of the trip of a lifetime.

The scenic wonders and the natural beauty attract thousands of tourists every year but disaster struck when the Bhote Koshi river ripped through Rasuwa and Nuwakot districts north of Kathmandu at about 8.30am local time. Villages, roads, bridges and cars were swept away. Hundreds are feared dead.

After Bector's husband, Bhupesh, learnt about the news of the flash floods thousands of miles away at home in Slough, Berkshire, he frantically checked his iPhone for his wife's location on the app Find My Friends. It had not changed for more than seven hours, remaining on the Pasang Lhamu Highway. Bhupesh Bector told The Times he was "very worried" and was desperate to find out more about the whereabouts of his 53-year-old wife.

Because his wife's friend did not get a visa approved in time for the trip, she was travelling without close companions or family from August 21 and was making her way to the Nepal-Tibet border.

FishTail Tours, the agency in charge of her itinerary in Nepal, has not heard from the sherpa in charge of leading her group.

"All I know is she was one hour away from the Friendship Bridge and the tour operator said its last contact with the sherpa Gelu Dai was at around 8.16am local time," Bhupesh Bector said.

Before the floods hit, he believes his wife was not far from the Timure police border checkpoint but he was unable to contact anyone in their group at around 9.15am yesterday.

At roughly the same time that he learnt his wife was in grave danger, local news reported the inspector of the armed police force and nine border police remained out of contact. Last year, a flood in the Bhote Koshi river killed nine people and the Friendship Bridge, which connects Nepal and China, was washed away.

The flash flooding reportedly entered from the direction of China and the mud and debris which followed in its wake washed away infrastructure close to the Timure bazaar.

The Bectors met 30 years ago when they were working together in Mumbai. Yesterday evening Bhupesh Bector was trying to get more information from the Home Office.

An app showed Leena Bector's phone had not moved for many hours

Despite calling three times, he said: "I'm still waiting for a callback to check if she's one of the 33 British people who are on the missing list."

He received a case number from the Home Office but was due to take the next available flight to Kathmandu because he wants to help with efforts to locate his wife.

"I want to go to Kathmandu now... as I'm sure she's on the Nepal side ... She must be in trauma ... wherever she is safe and sound," he said.

The couple have a daughter aged 20 and a son of 14. Before rushing to the airport, he said he planned to drop them with friends.

"I know she's in Nepal for sure ... so even if they find her today or tomorrow, I need to be there," he added.

Labourer avoided death by clinging on to mango tree

Continued from page 1

follow local authority advice and exercise caution while travelling.

Survivors' accounts came to light last night. One Nepalese labourer described clinging on to a mango tree to avoid being swept away. Bibek Kumai said he heard a hissing sound before his co-workers shouted at him.

He said from the National Trauma Centre in Kathmandu: "I started running. Then a wall of water came thundering down as if it was an earthquake."

Kumai said he was swept downstream in the mud and debris before becoming stuck up a mango tree. "Had there been no mango tree, I would have been washed away to death," he said.

Kalpana Malla told the BBC her parents, sister and sister's children were washed away. "They could not escape the flood; there was no chance at all," she said. "This flood took everything, but my son and I climbed the rooftop of a house and survived."

Sunil Sharma, a tourism board spokesman, said 133 of the missing tourists were from India on pilgrimage to Mount Kailash. Also missing were 47 visitors from the United States, 34 from Australia and 24 from Canada.

The Nepal Tourism Board said that its staff and tourist police were "working to verify the whereabouts and safety status of tourists and travellers who were in or travelling through the affected areas".

News

Meta settles $18bn US lawsuit pledging child safety overhaul

Keiran Southern Los Angeles
Mark Sellman Technology Correspondent

Meta has agreed to pay up to $18 billion and overhaul Facebook and Instagram for young users in a landmark settlement with a coalition of US states over claims its platforms harmed children.

The technology giant faced a sprawling lawsuit which went to trial at a federal court in Oakland, California, where experts gave evidence that the company designed its products to be addictive.

The claim was brought by 29 states, led by California, Colorado, Kentucky and New Jersey. Yesterday, a day after the head of Instagram was called to the witness box, it was announced Meta had reached a settlement that resolved claims from 47 states, Washington and three US territories.

Meta accepted enormous concessions that campaigners hailed as a watershed moment in the fight to rein in Big Tech. Bereaved parents and experts had warned for years that social media posed a significant threat to young users, whose developing brains were particularly vulnerable.

The changes to Instagram and Facebook include the introduction of daily usage limits, night-time blocks for teenagers and more robust age-verification measures. Meta accepted enhanced parental supervision tools, a ban on displaying the number of likes or reactions to under-18s and a ban on image filters that simulate cosmetic surgery.

An independent auditor will be appointed to oversee compliance. A US district judge is expected to approve the settlement. Rob Bonta, the California attorney-general, said the deal would "make a world of difference".

He said: "Meta has agreed to make massive transformations that will reduce the risk of harm from its platforms — and will do it within months.

"We are talking about time limits, stopping notifications during school, a block on the app during critical overnight hours, bans on plastic surgery filters, and so much more.

"Alongside a bipartisan coalition of my colleagues, I am proud to deliver this settlement that addresses the concerns at the core of our lawsuit and institutes real change, real transparency, and real enforceable protections for children on Facebook and Instagram — right now, no more waiting."

Meta, which made a profit of $60 billion last year, said the enhanced controls "set a new industry standard" and called on other social media companies to follow suit. Seventy per cent of the money will be paid over ten years to improve online safety. Meta said the remaining 30 per cent, about $5.3 billion, would be released only if YouTube and TikTok, its biggest rivals, agreed to "implement a one-hour daily limit, night mode and age-assurance measures" and "each pay an amount matching the 30 per cent figure".

Before its near-capitulation, Meta's lawyers had denied its platforms were addictive for children. It said safety was a top priority and that the measures it had taken were sufficient. Meta had claimed that the states were seeking damages of up to $1.4 trillion. The states said it was closer to $200 billion.

The settlement spared Mark Zuckerberg, the Meta chief executive, having to give evidence.

In recent years Meta has faced lawsuits from states, parents and school districts over allegations that it exploited children for profit. The company lost another case in New Mexico, where it was ordered to pay $942 million for the harms inflicted on young users. The closely watched trial, which concluded in March, was told that sexual predators had used Instagram and Facebook to target children. Meta appealed.

Also in March a young woman successfully sued Meta in Los Angeles, claiming that her mental health problems were caused in part by her heavy use of its platforms as a child.

Matthew Bergman, who founded the Social Media Victims Law Centre, said the settlement reflected a profound change in how tech companies were viewed by the public.

"We have heard for a long time Meta evading any accountability and denying that it has harmed kids, that its products are addictive," he said. "This settlement speaks volumes to show that that narrative has changed. I don't think they've suddenly become responsible corporate citizens. I just think they read the writing on the wall."

GODOFREDO A. VASQUEZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Mothers of teenagers who died by suicide at the court in Oakland. Mark Zuckerberg, below, was due to give evidence

Q&A

What has Meta agreed?
The company will pay nearly $12.2 billion to the coalition of US states. The money can be used to fund online safety initiatives. Meta agreed to increase this to about $18 billion if YouTube and TikTok strike similar deals. Arguably more significant are the changes to its apps. It is a long list but the main ones are that, by default, under-18s on Facebook and Instagram will:

- be limited to two hours a day, cumulatively
- not be able to access the platforms between midnight and 6am
- not receive push alerts between 10pm and 7am or during school hours
- receive prompts to pause their use after 15, 60 and 90 minutes
- have likes and reactions on posts hidden.

These will be implemented within six months and only parents can turn off these default features. Adults will be able to change their children's default feed to a non-algorithmic one and stop autoplay on videos. Meta promised further steps to stop under-18s seeing toxic content.

Key to all this is Meta's commitment to check the age of users to a high standard and for this to be independently verified within three years. The importance of this part cannot be overstated: without a rigorous age-checking system, none of the measures are effective, as Australia found when children were able to bypass checks after its social media ban.

Who does this affect?
These changes apply only to users in the United States but experts believe this effectively sets a new global minimum standard for social media safety controls. Meta will be aware that once they are implemented in the US, it will be hard to argue that children across the world should not benefit.

Meta is pressing its rivals to follow suit and is offering to add billions more to the settlement and to institute stronger safety features if they do so.

What about the UK?
The deal reinforces the Online Safety Act, which requires social media platforms to shield children from toxic content, and the proposed social media ban for under-16s. The muting of push alerts goes further than any UK proposal and applies to all under-18s.

The overnight curfew ties in with what the government has proposed but potentially gives it more teeth, as only a parent can turn it off. More generally, a settlement like this, which can be enforced by US courts, will help regulators outside America to push their case on safety issues.

Why has this deal been struck?
According to one leading lawyer, Meta has "seen the writing on the wall". Thousands more legal cases are waiting in the wings and governments across the world are lining up social media bans. One industry insider said Meta would have had to do much of this anyway. And although the changes look significant, they do not require too much work from the tech giant and could put smaller competitors at a disadvantage. "Looking across the world, this is Meta's vision of where it lands over the next couple of years," the insider said.

Quintagram® No 2657

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Proverbially patient Bible figure (3)

_ _ _

2 Period of 1,440 minutes (3)

_ _ _

3 Consumerist activity (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

4 School punishment (9)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Socially connected group (9)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	B	C	D	D	E	E	G
H	I	I	I	J	M	M	N
N	N	N	O	O	O	O	P
P	S	T	T	T	U	Y	Y

Solutions see T2 MindGames p15
Cryptic clues T2 MindGames p14

Asylum policy rebuke

Ministers have taken "inconsistent action" to protect the rights of vulnerable migrants and on integrating asylum seekers into society, the Equality and Human Rights Commission has said. Its report criticised the ending of a Home Office initiative that helped refugees find work. The Home Office was approached for comment.

Fatal stabbing arrest

A 15-year-old boy has been arrested on suspicion of murder after a teenager was stabbed to death at a council headquarters building. David Wynter, 17, died on Tuesday at Brent Civic Centre in Wembley, northwest London. Muhammed Butt, the Labour leader of Brent council, said the community had been left "shaken" by the incident.

Jab's surprise benefit

The shingles vaccine used by the NHS may significantly reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, a new study suggests. It found that people given Shingrix suffered less cardiovascular disease than those given a predecessor, Zostavax. The benefit across the population "might be enormous", Oxford University's Dr Maxime Taquet, who led the study, said.

Plug-in solar is go

The sale of plug-in solar panels in UK shops and online is permitted from today. The panels are already commonplace in countries including Germany, where people hang them on balconies and fences. Miatta Fahnbulleh, the energy secretary, said: "Plug-in solar is a simple, affordable way for households to take control of their energy bills."

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Revealed: the zebra crossing where hundreds of cyclists fail to stop

Laurence Sleator, Callum Martin Ellie McDonald

Emerging from the Hyatt Regency Hotel just off Blackfriars Bridge on Tuesday morning, a young mother, her child in a pram, was attempting to cross the road to reach the nearby bus stop.

Waiting at the zebra crossing, where pedestrians have priority, she was met by a throng of cyclists flashing past, none even remotely considering applying the brakes.

Eventually, when a small gap emerged, she broke out into a run, not trusting the incoming riders to follow the Highway Code correctly and stop to let her and her child walk across.

Campaigners say the incident perfectly encapsulates a serious safety issue with so-called floating bus stops, a design which involves a dedicated, sometimes two-way, cycle lane placed between the pavement and the bus shelter.

The structure, designed to protect cyclists from buses, forces pedestrians to walk into bicycle traffic to reach the shelter. A zebra crossing is placed across it in the hope that cyclists will give way.

But at the floating bus stop near Blackfriars Bridge between 8am and 9am on Tuesday, The Times counted 357 cyclists who failed to stop at the zebra crossing when a pedestrian was clearly waiting.

At another floating bus stop at Elephant & Castle during the evening rush hour, 196 cyclists failed to stop when they should have.

At the Blackfriars site, in just 60 minutes of rush hour traffic there were two crashes at the site, both caused by riders who did stop, creating a pile-up behind them as the peloton bunched up.

There were also six near-misses, including an e-bike rider who jumped onto the pavement to go around a queue of bikes that had decided to stop for a pedestrian.

Frustrated pedestrians attempting to cross could be seen gesticulating, exchanging hostile words with the rule-breakers or clapping sarcastically at the riders who did stop.

Pedestrians were often left waiting in the middle of the road if the riders heading south stopped to let them walk but the northbound cyclists continued.

Others could be seen ignoring the zebra crossing altogether, walking down the road till a gap emerged rather than use the supposedly safer option.

TOBY SHEPHEARD FOR THE TIMES

Many cyclists rode over the zebra crossing despite pedestrians clearly waiting to reach the Blackfriars floating bus stop

The riders themselves could be seen on expensive road bikes, folding bikes, illegal and legal e-bikes, rented bikes such as Lime and Forest, as well as some on e-scooters.

Most seen by The Times were without helmets but wearing headphones, some taking phone calls with their mobile pressed to their ear.

Jet Tankaria, 72, uses the bus stop every day to get to his job in facility maintenance. "It's shocking, mate," he said. "They don't stop and they come so fast. You try and cross now and they will chop you in half.

"I've had a couple of near-misses myself. One the guy wouldn't stop and I had to stop myself. He narrowly missed me."

As set out in Rule 195 of the Highway Code, it is an offence not to give way to people who have moved onto a zebra crossing, including those placed at floating bus stops. Introduced in 2013 and now with more than 160 of the structures across the capital, the floating bus stop is not just causing issues at Blackfriars Bridge.

The Times also visited two notorious hotspots during Tuesday rush hour: Snow Hill on Farringdon Street and Elephant & Castle.

At Elephant & Castle, one accident was seen when two e-bikes slammed into each other after leaving it too late to slow down for a crossing mother and child.

The issue has become so bad that last week City of London police attended some crossings, including Blackfriars, to engage with cyclists and remind them of their responsibilities. Anyone caught going dangerously through a crossing could be subject to a £50 fine.

In the City of London, from April 2025 to the end of March this year, the force's cycle team issued 1,315 fixed penalty notices to cyclists, compared with 643 in the same period last year.

Data on the number of cyclists issues with fixed penalty notices across the whole country is not collected by the National Police Chiefs' Council.

A force spokesperson said they were "particularly concerned" about reports raised by The Times of cyclists who rode around others who stopped to allow pedestrians to cross. They described these actions as "highly dangerous".

Floating bus stops are not just used in London but across the country, including in areas of Manchester, Cambridge and Leeds.

However, last year, when safety concerns were raised the Department for Transport asked local authorities to scrap designs requiring passengers to get on or off the bus directly from, or into, a cycle track.

Further research is also under way to ensure public safety is prioritised in any future designs.

Some campaigners want this to go further with the rollout halted and action launched to remove those already in use.

Sarah Gayton, from the National Federation for the Blind, said: "Everyone has the right to get from A to B safely. The cyclists know these designs are putting them into conflict with pedestrians, but why have they got to race? Why treat London as a velodrome when they know pedestrians are around?

"Their behaviour and the design of the stop are stopping blind people having the confidence to go out. Put the shoe on the other foot, how would they feel? It's not fair."

Transport for London said: "We're determined to ensure that changes to London's roads work for everyone, and bus stop bypasses are an important part of delivering more inclusive cycling infrastructure and improving road safety.

"All road users must follow the rules of the road and stop at zebra crossings, and it is clearly unacceptable for anyone to fail to do so. We are working on measures to increase awareness of bus stop bypasses among cyclists."

A Department for Transport spokesperson said: "All cyclists have a responsibility to obey our road rules, including giving way to people using zebra crossings, and not doing so is an offence."

Letters, page 26

Text alerts to warn of dirty air days

Adam Vaughan Environment Editor

People with asthma and other lung conditions will be able to subscribe to text alerts from the government warning of days with harmful air pollution.

Doctors and campaigners have pushed for more action to tackle dirty air, but it has been a low priority for ministers compared with cleaning up water pollution. Now a free service has been set up to send an alert to people's phones when high or very high air pollution is forecast.

There has been progress on air quality thanks to clean air zones, more electric cars and the closure of coal power stations, but a least five areas including Greater Manchester and Liverpool are still above legal limits for nitrogen dioxide, a toxic gas. Campaigners say other data suggests even more areas remain above safe levels.

Using the government's "check air quality" service, people can put in their postcode to see the pollution forecast for the next four days and sign up for alerts advising of harmful conditions.

The service tracks five pollutants including ozone, a gas which is harmful at ground level and has spiked during the recent heatwaves, and tiny particulate matter of the type generated by wildfires. Smoke from fires that lasted three weeks around Greater Manchester last month led the authorities to urge people to close windows.

During periods of high pollution, the government advises older people and those with lung or heart conditions to avoid any "physically demanding" activities outdoors. "The health impacts are greatest for the most vulnerable — children, pregnant women and people with pre-existing cardiovascular or lung conditions," said Sir Chris Whitty, the chief medical officer for England.

Dame Angela Eagle, the environment secretary, said the service was "another way" the government was tackling air pollution. However, Labour has been quiet on the subject since taking power two years ago and there is no timetable for when its promised air quality strategy will be published.

A long-term environment plan stopped short of banning sales of new wood-burning stoves, though officials later said they should carry health warning labels.

'Clean' bathing waters carry risk of stomach bugs and rash

Ben Cooke Environment Correspondent

Swimming in a river or lake can raise your chance of a stomach bug and double your chance of a skin rash, even if it meets bathing quality standards, researchers have found.

In one of the first studies to quantify the health risks from swimming in designated bathing waters, researchers at the University of East Anglia found bathers exposed themselves to *E. coli*, a bacterium in raw and treated sewage.

Bathing increased the risk of a stomach bug by 11 per cent, researchers found. For every tenfold increase in *E. coli*, the risk of a stomach bug rose 73 per cent. The researchers carried out their study on 2,368 volunteers at sites in Hungary, asking half to go swimming and dip their heads under the water, and half to remain on the shore. Those who went swimming were twice as likely to develop a rash, yet the probability did not rise with the presence of pollutants, suggesting rashes were caused by naturally occurring parasites. While the results were not gathered in Britain, the EU's bathing water standards are the same as the UK's.

Last year the Environment Agency judged the water quality of 93 per cent of Britain's 451 bathing sites to be at least "sufficient" for swimming.

Burnham signals budget relief for rising energy bills

Geraldine Scott Assistant Political Editor
Steven Swinford Political Editor
Ben Clatworthy Whitehall Editor

Andy Burnham could use October's budget to take further steps to lower energy bills as households face a rise of more than £200 within six months.

Ofgem announced yesterday that the energy price cap would increase by 4 per cent in October, taking the annual bill for a typical household from £1,663 to £1,723.

The regulator said higher wholesale costs, driven by international gas prices, were the main cause.

Cornwall Insight, the energy consultancy, predicted a 9 per cent rise in January, equivalent to a £149 price rise on average bills, driving a them up by £209 overall by the start of next year.

The prime minister said rising energy bills were "difficult" for people and promised to look at long-term solutions to bring bills down.

The Times understands measures could be set out at the budget in October to provide some short-term "breathing room". Burnham also said he would aim to "take pressure off" businesses facing "hard" conditions before the budget.

In an interview with the Financial Times, the prime minister said: "I'm not coming into this role thinking, how do we make life harder? I'm trying to make life easier for people. How do I take pressure off? How do I meaningfully deal with the cost of living and the cost of business?"

Asked specifically about helping with bills over the winter, Miatta Fahnbulleh, the energy secretary, told LBC: "We're going to keep looking at this, and we're looking at all options ... We know that the cost of living is the No 1 issue for many families, and government has to step in to protect people through this pinch."

A senior government source told The Times discussions were ongoing about what further support could look like. However, there were concerns about the cost of any package.

Burnham said the announcement made on his first day in office about taking VAT off electricity bills had provided "a little bit of help" but added: "We'll continue to look as we go forward at how we get energy prices down in the long term, and that's what we need to do too."

Ministers have been urged to go "further and faster in helping people".

Greg Jackson, the founder of Octopus Energy, said: "Britain remains far too exposed to volatile global gas prices. The wars in Ukraine and Iran have created an unprecedented double crisis, with gas prices more than doubling since the start of the year. We urgently need to reform the market, make better use of our wind, and let people benefit from cheaper prices when green energy is abundant."

Fahnbulleh opened the door to an overhaul of the electricity market when she said allowing gas to dictate the price of cheaper renewable power was "clearly not working for consumers".

The October rise would have been about £45 higher without the decision to temporarily scrap VAT on electricity.

Miatta Fahnbulleh said the government would "step in to protect people"

Burnham said yesterday that he wanted regional mayors to oversee measures to cut energy costs for businesses and added: "Grid connection is an issue which relates directly to growth and investment."

He repeated his pledge to take a "pragmatic" approach to drilling in the North Sea as part of a "bridge to a renewable future" before decisions on the Jackdaw and Rosebank oil and gas fields.

Fahnbulleh told Times Radio she was "very exercised" about decoupling gas and renewable prices and was "absolutely determined" to examine what more could be done.

The wholesale electricity price is set by the most expensive generator needed to meet demand. This is often a gas-fired power station, meaning international gas prices can dictate the price even when much of the electricity is being generated more cheaply by wind, solar and nuclear power.

Asked why the government could not move faster, Fahnbulleh said: "The difficulty that we have is the way that our energy market is designed means that there's a techie thing that's called marginal pricing and the energy that you use at the end, which tends to be gas, sets and dictates the price of everything. Now, that is clearly not working for consumers, which is why we are determined to decouple."

Fahnbulleh also said the government was "locking renewable providers and generators into fixed-term contracts, which means that the price is less affected by the gas price on the day".

Under the contracts for difference programme, those generating renewable energy can swap from a volatile market to being paid a fixed price for their electricity. If the market price rises above the agreed price, the extra profit would come off consumer bills, but if it fell below the generator would receive a top-up so they did not lose out.

A rethink on net zero is a must, leading article, page 27

Andy Burnham went to Sainsbury's with Pat McFadden, the work and pensions

What options does PM have for cutting gas and power costs?

Ministers are examining options to help households facing rising energy costs this winter (Ben Clatworthy writes).

Here are some of the possible measures.

UNIVERSAL SUPPORT
Another universal energy bailout — similar to the package offered by Liz Truss in 2022, which cost £44 billion — is considered unaffordable. Even if annual bills rise by the forecast 9 per cent in January to £1,872 a year , this would still be significantly below the January 2023 high of £4,279. The Resolution Foundation, a left-leaning think tank, says the richer half of households receive more than half the benefit of any universal package.

TARGETED SUPPORT
In January a project began to improve the sharing of data among the Department for Work and Pensions, the Treasury and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, to allow support to be targeted more precisely by linking information on earnings, benefits and energy use.

The Resolution Foundation has proposed an interim measure based on each household's highest earner. It says setting the qualifying earnings limit at £24,000 a year would lead to the scheme helping about 40 per cent of households. This group would cover 75 per cent of those in the lowest 40 per cent for income.

EXTENDING THE WARM HOME DISCOUNT
Ministers could increase the value of the discount, which gives six million low-income households £150 off energy bills each winter. The scheme, which has been extended until 2030-31, is applied to the accounts of eligible households using data held by the DWP.

The cost is recovered through the unit rate for electricity and gas for all households, meaning a vast expansion would push bills up more broadly.

SOCIAL TARIFFS
Discounted energy tariffs for poorer and more vulnerable households were phased out from 2011 in favour of the warm home discount. Citizens Advice has argued the tariffs should be reintroduced and based on household income and energy consumption. "Receipt of means-tested benefits should be one qualifying condition, but not the only one," it said. "The significant number of households with low incomes who are not in receipt of benefits should also qualify for the social tariff."

Some campaigners favour the idea of a discounted unit rate while others prefer a lump sum that varies according to income and energy use.

DECOUPLING GAS AND ELECTRICITY
The wholesale electricity market largely operates through marginal pricing, meaning the most expensive source of generation needed to meet demand — often a gas-fired power station — can set the wholesale price. As a result, spikes in international gas prices, as prompted by the wars in Ukraine and Iran, can push up electricity prices.

Miatta Fahnbulleh, the energy secretary, said yesterday that the system was "clearly not working for consumers". She said steps already taken included contracts that guarantee renewable generators a set price for their electricity, reducing their exposure to the wholesale market.

WRITING OFF DEBT
Ministers could accelerate plans to write off hundreds of millions of pounds of historic energy debt built up by struggling households. The latest Ofgem data shows this debt has hit £4.8 billion. EDF has said the cost of unpaid debt is adding £60 to the average bill. Questions remain over who would fund the write-off.

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE

secretary, and Lord Khan of Tooting, the London mayor, to announce the company's 10,000 work experience placements

UK to host global centre to prevent extremist attacks

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

Britain is to host an international counterterrorism hub to identify and catch ultra-violent extremists across the world as part of efforts to stop a repeat of the Southport attack, The Times can reveal.

Experts from the US, Australia, Canada and New Zealand will be deployed to work alongside their British counterparts in a permanent "countering violent extremism" centre in London. The unit will aim to detect violent videos and extremist propaganda posted on social media and intervene before they spread. The Home Office said that by acting together the five countries would be able to exert greater pressure on tech companies to remove content that might not be illegal but could breach the terms of service.

A number of atrocities in recent years have been carried out by criminals radicalised online through exposure to harmful content, extremist propaganda and violent networks.

The Home Office said the unit would try to prevent violent attacks not linked to a specific ideology, and stop the radicalisation effects of new technology, including AI.

Shabana Mahmood, the home secretary, announced that a programme would be established to intervene with youngsters similar to Axel Rudakubana, the Southport killer, who show signs of radicalisation or develop a fixation with violence but do not have a clear ideology.

The new scheme, to be called the "online-offline diversions" programme, will plug gaps in counterextremism measures. Increasing numbers of young people are being referred to the government's Prevent programme, which was set up to tackle terrorism rather than modern forms of extremism and violence.

Those assessed as needing further intervention will be referred to specialist support services such as mental health services, psychologists or therapists. As with Prevent, anyone referred to the scheme would have to give consent.

Mahmood announced the plans in Sydney during the annual meeting of interior ministers from the UK, US, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, known collectively as the Five Eyes security partnership.

The Home Office said the hub would enable counterextremism experts from all five countries to share intelligence, data and expertise and to try plans in tandem rather than each running their own pilots and then comparing notes.

Mahmood said: "Bringing together intelligence and expertise from our closest international partners will strengthen our ability to disrupt dangerous networks and prevent violence before lives are put at risk.

"The radicalisation of children and young people online is a particular concern across the globe. Our new diversion programme will ensure we act faster to keep everyone safe. For years, the Five Eyes have worked together to make the citizens of each of our countries safer. This is the next step forward in that shared endeavour."

Of the 10,293 referrals to Prevent last year, 5,770 were classed as having no ideology, more than referrals for far-right or Islamist extremism combined.

Rudakubana had been referred to Prevent three times because of his interest in terrorist attacks, school shootings, genocide and other violent content. However, counterterrorism officers took no further action after deciding he had no obvious ideology.

Rudakubana, then 17, watched a video of the attempted murder of a bishop in Australia minutes before he embarked on his attack on a Taylor Swift-themed dance class in July 2024, killing three girls and wounding several others. The social media platform X had refused requests by Australia's internet regulator to remove the video.

The Southport attack was followed by two alleged copycat cases in which two teenagers were arrested on suspicion of planning attacks inspired by Rudakubana.

The Institute for Strategic Dialogue said the events reflected the spectrum of influence from violent subcultures of nihilistic violence and showed the need for responses to focus on specific harmful behaviour rather than identifying and targeting violent groups.

Why electricity prices are so shocking

Emma Powell
Media and Telecoms Editor

The cost of energy in the UK is among the highest in Europe, largely down to higher electricity costs.

The average price of domestic electricity in Britain was 34.54p per kWh last year, according to Aurora, the energy consultancy. That compared with an average of 21.98p per kWh across the European Union and 12.85p per kWh in the United States. Only Germany and Ireland had more expensive electricity than the UK.

WHY IS ENERGY MORE EXPENSIVE IN THE UK THAN EUROPE?

Governments have chosen to finance the maintenance and upgrade of the network as well as environmental and social policies via energy bills rather than through general taxation.

The UK still significantly depends on gas, which accounted for 31 per cent of electricity generation in 2024, according to the International Energy Agency. Geopolitical turmoil has caused the wholesale cost of gas to soar, pushing bills higher.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN BILLS?

Nesta, the think tank, found that from an average electricity bill of £948 in the first quarter of this year, only £335 was the wholesale cost of generating the electricity.

About £214 was spent on maintaining and upgrading the pylons and pipes. Meanwhile, just over £170 went towards financing government energy policies such as subsidies for renewables.

WHAT COULD BRING DOWN BILLS?

Shifting more fixed costs from bills to general taxation is one possible solution, but would mean households and businesses pay by different means.

Some have called for the standing charge — a fixed daily fee paid regardless of energy consumption — to be scrapped altogether or for more fixed costs to be added to the unit rate.

There have been calls for a social tariff, which would allow eligible customers to pay a reduced price per unit.

HOW HAS IT AFFECTED BUSINESSES?

A survey by Make UK, the industry lobby group, found that a quarter of British manufacturers had moved some of their operations overseas, or were considering doing so. Energy costs also present a greater financial hurdle for technology companies looking to develop data centres for AI.

WILL BILLS RISE FURTHER?

A plan to remove VAT from energy bills from October will reduce the Ofgem price cap by about £45, the prime minister has said. The impact is expected to be outweighed by continuing uncertainty in the Middle East, which is set to keep wholesale gas prices high.

Anxiety diagnosis 'must not lead to life on benefits'

Daisy Eastlake Political Reporter

Being diagnosed with anxiety or depression should not lead to a "life on benefits", Pat McFadden has said.

The work and pensions secretary said work as well as training and "purposeful activity" — including volunteering, clubs and sports — were the answer to the problem of rising mental ill health in young adults.

More than a million young people are not in education, employment or training (Neet).

Alan Milburn, who is leading a review of the rising number of Neets, said an "anxious generation" of young people were being kept out of employment by struggles with mental health.

McFadden said: "Work is good for you. It's bad for your mental health to be sitting at home isolated. The last thing we want to see is a diagnosis of problems leading to a lifetime on benefits."

McFadden visited the Boots head office in Nottingham, east Midlands, to meet participants on a youth employment programme called the Youth Jobs Guarantee. Young people can be hired through the scheme when they have been out of work for more than 18 months. The government pays for 25 hours of their wages a week for six months to encourage employers to help them back into work.

The costs of sickness and disability benefits has reached £100 billion a year, up 37 per cent since Covid. It is projected to hit £117 billion by the end of the decade.

Andy Burnham has said his government must "get the welfare bill down" and that having one million young Neets is "not good for the country".

News

Early releases 'contradict' vow to women

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

Labour's early release scheme "directly contradicts" its vow to halve violence against women and girls, according to a letter to Andy Burnham signed by more than a hundred organisations.

The letter said the scheme should exclude male perpetrators of violence against women or, failing that, be paused until adequate protections were put in place. The signatories warned that the present plan would "put the lives of women and children at risk".

They want victims of domestic abuse and other gender-based violence to get at least three months' notice before their perpetrator is released, affording them time to make plans for their safety, engage with relevant agencies and access specialist support. Women's Aid, which organised the letter, said that a notice period was vital given the significantly higher risk of repeat offending by domestic abusers compared with others set for early release.

The letter said the early release scheme "goes in direct contradiction" to Labour's manifesto pledge to halve rates of violence against women and girls. The government plans to meet the goal by 2034 through measures including specialist rape courts and police units, but the letter said the early release scheme would undermine victims' confidence in the criminal justice system, which was "already extremely low".

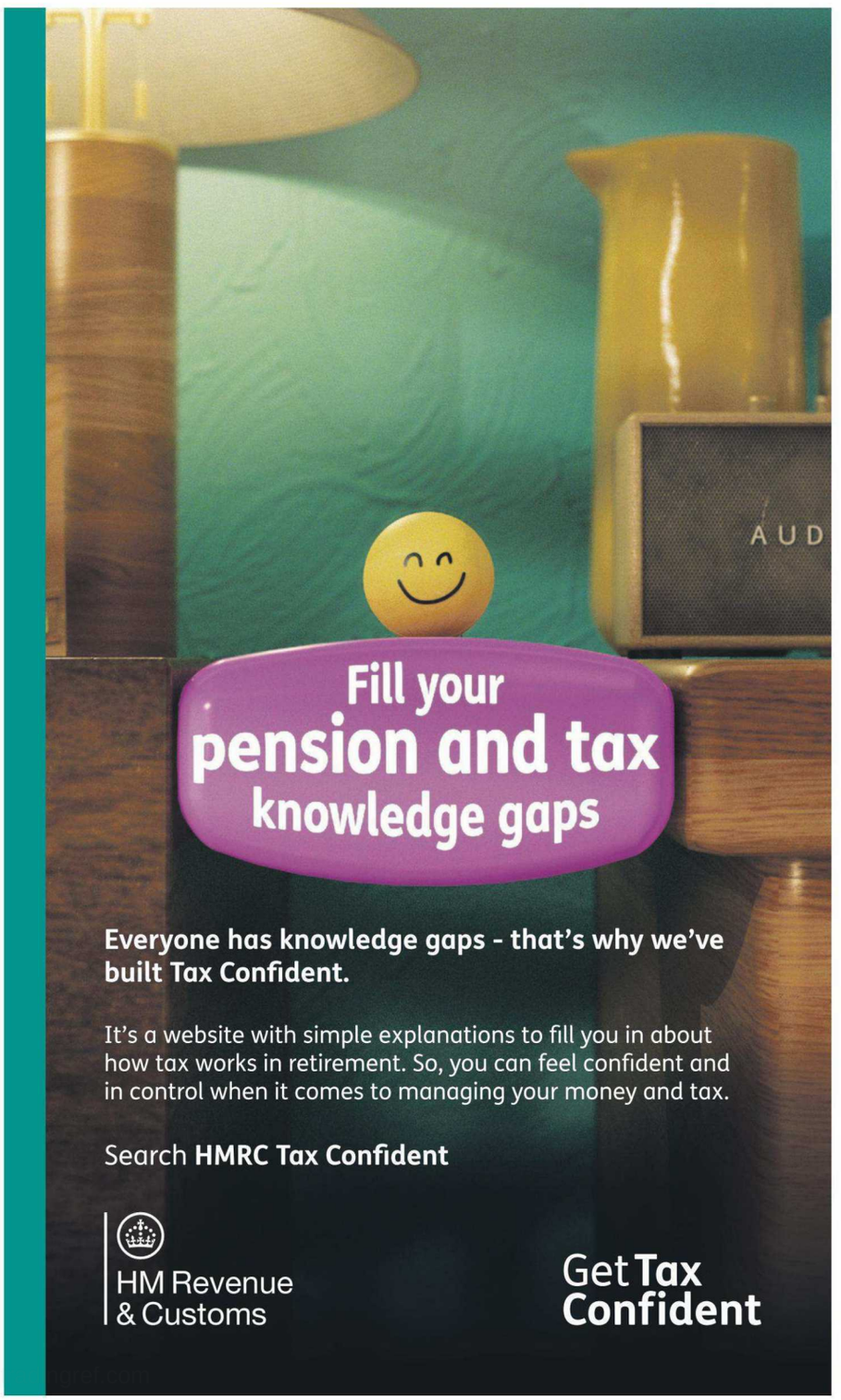
The scheme has been delayed until October 1 by Burnham, who announced he was reviewing it days after becoming prime minister last month.

Next week Alex Norris, the justice secretary, will announce the final details of the plans, which involve releasing thousands of prisoners as little as a third of the way into their sentences. Prisoners will be able to earn early release through good behaviour as part of Labour's long-term solution to overcrowding in prisons in England and Wales, which are 98 per cent full and have only 1,665 available spaces.

Norris announced this month that rapists, serious child-sex offenders and groomers would be excluded from the scheme alongside 18,000 others who were already barred, such as murderers and terrorists, but Burnham has instructed him to also find a way to block the release of PC Andrew Harper's killers Albert Bowers and Jessie Cole.

Proposals being considered by ministers would exclude prisoners convicted of "unlawful act manslaughter", but this would not exclude killers convicted of the more serious "voluntary manslaughter" offence that applies to many domestic crimes. Norris is now confident that secondary legislation covering the so-called unlawful act would keep Bowers and Cole behind bars, according to The Daily Telegraph.

The Ministry of Justice denied that a final decision had been made. It said it had inherited a system "on the brink of collapse" but was "fast-tracking a plan to keep more of the most dangerous offenders behind bars" while "strengthening protections for victims".



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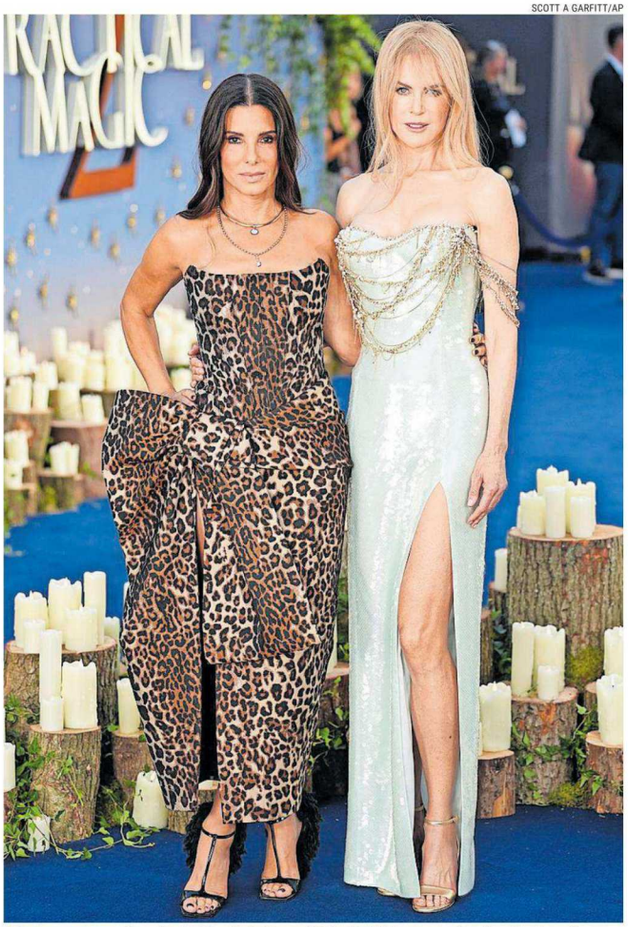


Witch way now Sandra Bullock, left, and Nicole Kidman arrive for the London premiere of Practical Magic 2, a sequel to their spooky 1998 romantic fantasy

Streeting: People can't handle a gay man running the army

Larisa Brown Defence Editor

Wes Streeting said he has received an "unbelievable volume" of homophobic abuse since he became defence secretary last month because "people cannot cope with the idea that a gay person might lead the armed forces".

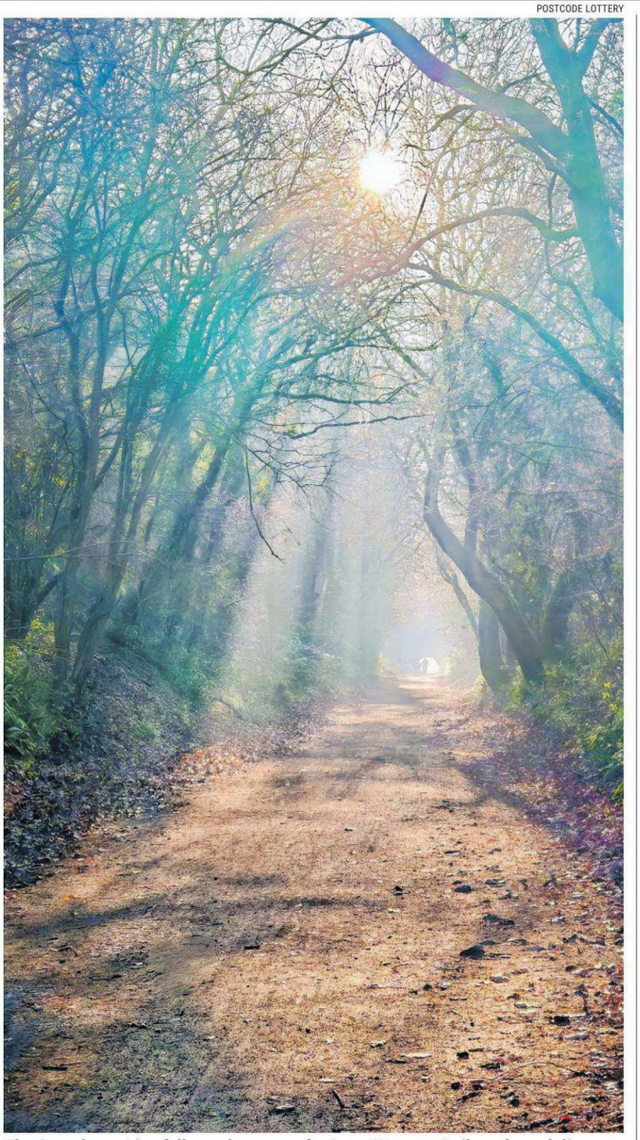
Streeting, the former health secretary, is the first openly gay person to take charge at the Ministry of Defence. Until 2000, it was illegal to be openly gay in the British armed forces. Streeting, 43, told the *All Talk* podcast: "I have experienced more online homophobia in the last three weeks than I have in my entire life ... I am proud of the fact that in my lifetime we've gone from gay people not being able to serve in the military to a gay defence secretary."

Pete Hegseth, his US counterpart and a former member of the Army National Guard, has denounced diversity and inclusion efforts in the American military. Last year in June, a month meant to celebrate the LGBT community, he appeared to order the US navy to strip the name of the prominent gay rights activist and navy veteran Harvey Milk from a ship.

However, a first phone call between Streeting and Hegseth last month was said to have been surprisingly warm.

Streeting went on to say: "In my first week, someone in the MoD said to me, 'As a gay man, I'm really proud we have our first gay defence secretary — it means a lot to us who remember the bad old days.' So I was quite touched by that."

POSTCODE LOTTERY



The Strawberry Line follows the route of a Great Western Railway branch line that ran until the late 1960s. The Buttermere Circular path, top left, is runner-up

Ramblers are sweet on old strawberry railway line

Volunteers have helped transform the disused Somerset route into the nation's favourite path, **Seren Hughes** writes

The British love affair with the countryside's miles of beautiful walks has continued unabated for centuries, aided by the likes of William Wordsworth, Alfred Wainwright and Julia Bradbury.

Now, the nation's favourite path has been named: a former railway line that once carried Somerset strawberries but has since become a traffic-free trail.

The section of the Strawberry Line path near Winscombe in North Somerset has won the title of Britain's favourite path 2026, a competition run by the Ramblers, the walking charity.

The path follows the route of a Great Western Railway branch line that ran from Witham Junction to Yatton, transporting locally grown strawberries destined for London and Birmingham until the late 1960s.

Since then, it has been transformed by volunteers alongside landowners and councils into more than 20 miles of path from the Mendips to the sea. The full path is still being developed.

A judging panel whittled down the nominated paths after a month-long public vote to select the winner.

Amanda Jane Baldwin, who nominated the path, said: "It's accessible in all weathers, it goes on for miles, it's an absolute pleasure to walk on, it's beautiful and I appreciate the nature all around me while on the path."

The runner-up was the Buttermere Circular Path in the Lake District. Stephen Ward, who voted for it, said: "It is a place to go when your mind is racing, to let the rugged beauty overwhelm your senses and calm you."

Third place went to the Holy Island Causeway path that starts in Scottish Borders and runs to the tidal Holy Island in Northumberland. The path was nominated by Ian Maggiore.

The path from Hangleton to Devil's Dyke in East Sussex, nominated by Sandra Foster for its "amazing views" and history, came fourth, ahead of the Cwm Idwal path in Snowdonia, Wales; the East Loch Lomond path on the West Highland Way in Scotland; the Pinnacle Hill path in the Malvern Hills; and the Little Ouse path in Norfolk.

Last year a stretch of the South West Coast path between Bude in Cornwall and Westward Ho! in Devon won.

Rachel Mulrenan, of the Ramblers, said: "Local paths are lifelines. They connect people with green space, fresh air and better mental and physical health. Right now, we need these things more than ever ... The Strawberry Line path is a fantastic example of how local communities can benefit from paths."

Six of the best

1 — Strawberry Line path near Winscombe in North Somerset
2 - Buttermere Circular path in the Lake District
3 — Holy Island Causeway path
4 — Hangleton to Devil's Dyke in East Sussex
5 — Cwm Idwal path in Snowdonia, Wales
6 — East Loch Lomond path on the West Highland Way, Scotland

Oxford faces revolt over single-sex spaces rule

Bill Curtis

The University of Oxford is facing criticism from hundreds of staff and students after adopting new guidance protecting single-sex spaces.

The university changed its policies so that transgender people must use the facilities of their biological sex rather than their gender identity, following guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

But an open letter signed by 330 members of the university community said Oxford should defy the code, which came into force this month.

The letter to Irene Tracey, the vice-chancellor, said: "We understand that the university ... is under immense pressure to adopt the EHRC's transphobic interpretation of the law. However, this is not an excuse to passively accept transphobia in our places of work, study and accommodation. There is an opportunity to set an example of the kind of resistance that is possible with its money, prestige and power."

It said the guidance "creates a hostile environment in which more people will be afraid to use their preferred facilities and transphobes are emboldened".

The EHRC code sets out how organisations should interpret a Supreme Court ruling in April last year that said the words "woman" and "sex" in equality law referred to biological sex and it was not unlawful to exclude transgender people from single-sex spaces such as changing rooms.

Signatories of the letter from Oxford University LGBTQ+ Society included Tad Komacek, a professor of physics, and Ashley Kamimae-Lanning, a DNA researcher. Other academics signed anonymously.

The society, which has more than 3,000 members, will meet on Sunday for an "Oxford Trans Assembly" in an effort to "build the start of a broad campaign of resistance".

Some Oxford academics criticised the letter. Michael Biggs, a sociology professor, said: "Providing single-sex facilities for men and for women will ensure the privacy and dignity of all students and staff. [Asking] the university to violate the law is misguided."

The University of Oxford said: "The university has updated its guidance on toilets and changing facilities in line with its legal requirements. Oxford is committed to ensuring that there is suitable provision of facilities for all staff, students and visitors."

Leith: Ban lunchboxes to limit treats

Nicola Woolcock Education Editor

Dame Prue Leith has called for lunchboxes to be banned in schools because parents find it hard to resist giving their children treats.

The food writer and former *The Great British Bake Off* judge, 86, wants free school meals for every child and for school meals to be compulsory.

All pupils in England from families on universal credit will be eligible for free school meals from September, amid an overhaul of school food standards. This is aimed at tackling childhood obesity and tooth decay.

Leith said: "It's the first time in my long life of campaigning for better school food that I've actually felt there's a government that is at least a little bit interested in getting food right in schools."

Of lunchboxes, she said: "I'm being much more draconian ... I think we should ban lunchboxes because you can't police what parents put in.

"It's very hard if you're a mum walking around a supermarket with your child, and a child wants to have that chocolate bar and whatever in their lunchbox. It's really hard because it's an easy way of sort of pleasing a child, and it's an easy way of almost buying love."

Many schools tell parents not to include crisps or fizzy drinks in lunchboxes and some remove them, but it is hard to monitor, and apparently healthy options are just as sugary. "If children eat junk and they don't like healthy food and they're not given healthy food they will not be healthy," Leith said. "But I'm not only keen on learning to like good food for health. I think it's such a joy and such an interest. I think it's a lost opportunity for pleasure."

School kitchen staff are undervalued, she said, and they can educate children about what they are eating and build their confidence to try new foods.

Leith praised efforts to improve school food, particularly the Chefs in Schools charity, part of the coalition delivering the School Food Project, supporting schools in England with initiatives such as catering team training. The first new school food standards since 2014 aim to ensure more fruit, vegetables and wholegrains are on offer. About one in three children leave primary school overweight or obese.

Parton's death won't close book on her literacy drive

Nicola Woolcock Education Editor

When Dolly Parton visited the UK nearly 20 years ago, Rotherham was perhaps an unexpected destination. The South Yorkshire town was where she launched her Imagination Library, which has earned tributes from the King and the author JK Rowling after the singer died on Tuesday.

Around seven million free books have been distributed to children since 2007 after Parton, who grew up with an illiterate father, created the Imagination Library dedicated to his memory. Volunteers among the 300 UK branches told The Times the Dollywood Foundation had reassured them the programme would continue.

The King's Guard played Parton's hit *9 to 5* outside Buckingham Palace yesterday and the royal family said on social media: "Remembering the late, great Dolly, who brought joy, comfort and inspiration to so many — including the millions of children given free books through her Imagination Library. We will always love you."

Rowling said Parton's Imagination Library "was the best contribution to child literacy ever made by a celebrity".

Dolly Parton's kindness will long outlive her, leading article, page 27
I loved her, Times2, pages 4-5

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Canal killer takes secrets to his grave

David Brown Chief News Correspondent

One of Britain's most notorious serial killers has died in jail without revealing what he did with his victims' heads or confirming his suspected involvement in a series of other murders.

John Sweeney, who became known as the "canal killer", received a whole-life sentence in 2011 for the murders of two former girlfriends, Melissa Halstead and Paula Fields.

He threw their mutilated bodies in canals and was not linked to their disappearances until after he was convicted of an axe attack on another girlfriend.

Police questioned Sweeney over the disappearance of three other former girlfriends but he was never charged with any further killings. Dutch police also investigated claims that Sweeney boasted of killing two German men.

Sweeney, 69, who called himself the Scalp Hunter, died of cancer at HMP Whitemoor in Cambridgeshire on August 14, according to prison sources.

A prison service spokesperson said: "These were horrific crimes and our thoughts remain with the victims and their loved ones. As with all deaths in custody, the prisons and probation ombudsman is investigating and it would be inappropriate to comment further before the conclusion of its findings."

The dismembered body of Halstead, 33, an American photographer and former model, was found in a bag in a canal in Rotterdam in May 1990. Her remains were not identified for 18 years.

The body of Fields, 31, was found in ten pieces in six bags by schoolboy anglers in the Regent's Canal in Camden, north London, in February 2001. The head, hands and feet of both women were missing and Sweeney refused to disclose what he did with them.

After his convictions, detectives said they wanted to trace three women who had relationships with Sweeney and "other potential victims in the UK, Netherlands and elsewhere in Europe who may have suffered a similar fate".

John Sweeney had an "obsessive and virulent hatred of women", his trial was told

When Sweeney was finally caught, police found "demonic" drawings of women's body parts, references to "666" and Sweeney depicted as Satan. One drawing entitled "The Scalp Hunter" showed a female skull hanging from a belt and an axe. They also discovered a poem in which he wrote: "Poor old Melissa, chopped her up in bits, food to feed the fish, Am*dam was the pits." Halstead's remains were exhumed and identified by DNA in 2008.

He told detectives that he had "30 to 40" relationships across Europe.

Sweeney refused to leave his prison cell to attend his sentencing at the Old Bailey in 2011. Imposing a whole-life tariff, Mr Justice Saunders said: "These were terrible, wicked crimes. The heads of the victims having been removed, it is impossible to be certain how they were killed. The mutilation of the bodies is a serious aggravating feature of the murders. Not only does it reveal the cold-blooded nature of the killer, but it has added greatly to the distress of the families to know that parts of the bodies of their loved ones have never been recovered."

Sweeney, a carpenter, was born in Kirkdale, Liverpool, and lived most of his early life in Skelmersdale, Lancashire. In 1982 he was bound over to keep the peace after threatening his then wife, Anne Bramley, with whom he had two children. Officers found him hiding in a wardrobe at the couple's home armed with a hammer and an axe.

A book by Delia Balmer, whom Sweeney tried to kill with an axe in 1994, was turned into a four-part ITV drama called *Until I Kill You* in 2024, starring Shaun Evans as Sweeney and Anna Maxwell Martin as Balmer.

OLIVER DIXON

Purple reign **The colourful borders outside the Palm House at Kew Gardens have thrived in the summer sunshine, drawing admiration from Teresa Lin, a commercial events assistant at the site** Weather, page 53

Heatwaves closer to freezing deaths

Adam Vaughan Environment Editor

The gap between deaths linked to the coldest and hottest days has narrowed as a growing proportion is estimated to be due to extreme heat.

Historically, cold weather-related deaths in England heavily outnumber those associated with heat. About 139,000 people died from the cold and 40,000 from heat in the past 38 years.

However, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said recent heatwaves had pushed heat-related deaths closer to those associated with the cold. The trend was clear even before the record temperatures this summer, which caused overheating in houses, care homes and hospitals.

An estimated 138,944 deaths in England were linked to the cold from 1988 to 2025, or 0.72 per cent of all deaths, the ONS said yesterday. By comparison, 40,063, 0.21 per cent of all deaths in England, were linked to heat.

That gap has narrowed. In 2022, there were several very hot days, including an unprecedented 40C heatwave. Across the year, 0.62 per cent of deaths in England were estimated to be linked to cold weather compared with 0.43 per cent for heat.

"The number of heat-related deaths has increased in recent years and is starting to converge with cold-related mortality," the ONS said. It added that it expected more heat-related deaths in the future as climate change continued.

The deaths are estimated using modelling based on how many people typically die during the hottest and coldest days, rather than looking at death certificates. The figures do not include deaths linked to the five heatwaves this summer, which included temperatures of 38.1C in August.

The UK Health Security Agency has estimated there were 2,877 heat-associated deaths during the two heatwaves in May and June. The agency said the figures for the whole summer were likely to be "substantially higher".

Christopher Callahan, an assistant professor at Indiana University who has studied heat-linked deaths in the UK and Europe this year, said the deaths came despite warnings and weather alerts. "It emphasises the degree to which Europe and many other places are still very vulnerable to heat. We knew it was coming and yet it is still quite dangerous," he told The Times.

Gareth Redmond-King at the ECIU, an environmental think tank, said the numbers confirmed that "extreme heat is a growing threat to lives in the UK".

Hopes of a common cold vaccine not to be sniffed at

Poppy Koronka Health Correspondent

An early trial for a vaccination against the common cold has been hailed as "encouraging" by scientists.

The jab targets three main species of rhinovirus which are responsible for the common cold.

Most cases of the cold are mild but for people with conditions such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, they can cause flare-ups.

Initial results of the phase one trial, conducted by scientists at Imperial College London and the biopharmaceutical firm Apollo Therapeutics, showed one dose was "well tolerated" by the 144 healthy adults tested.

Sebastian Johnston, professor of respiratory medicine and allergy at Imperial, said: "With so many different strains of rhinovirus currently circulating, developing a vaccine was long thought to be out of reach. It is very encouraging to see this progress into clinical results, which follow years of research and development."

Rhinoviruses have long been considered one of the most difficult targets for vaccine development because there are about 180 strains across three species. The vaccine was shown to develop a broad immune response in participants against all three, known as A, B and C.

Dr Richard Mason, chief executive of Apollo Therapeutics, said that the trial "represents an important milestone for the programme".

News

More shaken than stirred by 007 Proms

Classical Daniel Lewis

Bond and Beyond
Royal Albert Hall, London
(179min)
★★★☆☆

Amazon has spent billions of dollars to get creative control of the James Bond film franchise. Thankfully the BBC wouldn't have had to fork out quite so much for its *Bond and Beyond* Prom at the Royal Albert Hall, although it may still have had to spend a pretty penny to include so many of the theme songs. The concert also included a surprise appearance from Lulu, who gave a lived-in rendition of her signature *The Man with the Golden Gun* to rapturous applause. Her inaudible backing singer must be part of the package.

Everyone has a view on which direction the franchise should go in next. This Prom pointedly played up heyday nostalgia. The BBC Concert Orchestra handsomely delivered gleefully period-accurate arrangements of music from *The Man from UNCLE* and *The Avengers* — the Sixties TV series, not the Marvel franchise — as well as snippets of *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* by Yorkshire's finest, John Barry, responsible for many of the title tunes.

It's just a shame the overall presentation wasn't quite as slick and charming as the playing. It was endearing enough when the white-tuxedoed presenter Nick Mohammed, of *Ted Lasso* fame, had to redeliver an early gag "for the television broadcast" but thereafter seemed always on the verge of a fluff.

The Canadian conductor Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser was also a little wooden when introducing Radiohead's *Spectre* (not featured in the film) as his "favourite Bond song" — a bold and frankly unbelievable claim in a concert that featured *Skyfall*, *Goldfinger* and the indelible *Diamonds Are Forever*, tunes that fell to the gothic Naomi Banks to perform. Banks is a Lorde lookalike and Sia soundalike who, though occasionally imprecise, can summon a good Shirley Bassey belt.

Gloria Onitiri had to have her mic replaced a few bars into *For Your Eyes Only*, then drew back a little too far from it for her high notes, which, entertainingly, became raw-throated banshee wails in *A View to a Kill*. The soul star Omar's halting *You Only Live Twice* I found sad and strange.

Bond's debonair air was only really recaptured by Oliver Tompsett with his plush musical theatre croon, which acquired some grit in *Live and Let Die*, and his fellow West End denizen Rachel John, whose performance of *Nobody Does It Better* shifted imperceptibly from tender to slinky. But the real thriller was her singing my personal favourite, *Licence to Kill*. She blew the roof off.

Available on BBC Sounds; broadcast on BBC2/iPlayer on August 29

MARK ALLAN

Lulu made a surprise appearance and Nick Mohammed, left, brought the gags

Arday death classed as 'unnatural'

Ben Ellery Deputy Chief Reporter

Jason Arday, the Cambridge professor who resigned following a plagiarism row, died at his south London home after being found unresponsive by his family, an inquest has heard.

Despite attempts to resuscitate him, Arday, 41, was pronounced dead at the property in Battersea on August 14. The Metropolitan Police said there were no suspicious circumstances.

Opening the inquest yesterday, Dr Julian Morris, the senior coroner for inner south London, said Arday died an "unnatural death", a legal classification that requires investigation by a coroner but does not imply suspicious circumstances.

Arday, who became Cambridge's youngest black professor at the age of 37, had faced accusations of plagiarism in the weeks before his death.

Morris told the hearing at London inner south coroner's court, which was watched remotely by members of Arday's family: "The initial investigations, while I await the various reports, have given me reason to suspect that [he] died an unnatural death ... It therefore follows that I must open an investigation. I will be setting out further directions for the coroner officer."

Arday's publisher Simon & Schuster announced on Monday that his memoir, *Great and Unfortunate Things*, would be released as planned today.

Waitrose 2 Herby Halloumi Kebabs, 240g, £5. Waitrose 4 King Prawn Skewers with Creole Sauce, 163g, £5. Waitrose 4 Oak Smoked BBQ Beef Burgers, 545g, £5. Selected stores and lines. Subject to availability. Offer ends 15th Sept. Minimum online spend and delivery charges apply. Prices may vary in Channel Islands, Little Waitrose & Partners and concessions. Prices correct at time of going to print. Serving Suggestion shown.

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All quiet on Farage front

We are used to Nigel Farage being outspoken but in parliament he is being out-spoken. New data from Commons Clipper, a service that automatically records speeches for MPs' social media feeds, has revealed the most frequent and infrequent speakers in the House this year. While the rough average number of contributions is about 83, the Reform UK leader has managed a mere nine. In fact, Farage has already been overtaken by Douglas Lumsden (21 times), the Tory MP who was only elected in June. By contrast, the Greens' parliamentary leader, Ellie Chowns, has risen to speak 221 times, while Farage's colleague Richard Tice has reached 125. Other big names who have been quiet include Angela Rayner (two) and Louise Haigh (four) — though were they being quiet or merely biding their time?

MPs were more interested in another list yesterday. The website Sexy MP returned out of the blue, rating our representatives according to their looks. If you ask any MP in public about this, they will tell you it is a crude and puerile thing they shall rise above. Interesting, then, that the website crashed only hours after its relaunch due to "too many requests".

PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Helen Grant, the MP for Maidstone, is leading the charge to get a permanent memorial installed in parliament to honour Ann Widdecombe, Grant's predecessor who was killed last month. Talks are ongoing but for the meantime the Speaker has agreed to install a portrait of Widdecombe in Portcullis House. It's a fitting tribute, though the lady herself may have thought the picture to be far too good. Widdecombe had a large collection of "unflattering portraits" of herself, all of which had been drawn by the Guardian cartoonist Steve Bell. "He was always cross that I found them funny, when they were meant to be a bit nasty," Widdecombe recalled, "which in turn amused me mightily."

PARTON SHOT

Some years ago, the Smithsonian Institution made a mistake while attributing a quotation to a former US president. "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader" was ascribed to John Quincy Adams, but it was actually said by a more significant American figure: Dolly Parton. Some did, in fact, urge Parton to turn to politics, but she declined. She once told the BBC Washington correspondent Gavin Esler: "Honey, there have been enough boobs in the White House without mine."

Tim Curry, the actor, who has died, was supremely funny but with the laughter came some heartbreak. He once confessed to an onset romance during the 1990s that sadly went awry. "Miss Piggy," said Curry as he recalled the filming of Muppet Treasure Island *with a wistful look in his eye. "It didn't survive the shoot. She felt I wasn't being faithful to her." Curry did not deny her accusation but was still charming enough to persuade her that he was worth a second chance. "Then I made the mistake of calling her a silly sausage."*

JACK BLACKBURN

Diets 'too feminine' to help men get slim

Poppy Koronka Health Correspondent

Men struggle to lose weight on traditional dieting programmes because they are primarily aimed at women and seem too restrictive, research has found.

Avoiding the word "diet" in weight-loss programmes could help men engage in weight loss initiatives, scientists said, as could framing the programme as a challenge or competition.

NHS figures show that 70 per cent of men are classed as obese or overweight, compared with 62 per cent of women.

Published in the journal Plos One, a team from Anglia Ruskin University interviewed 24 men aged 30 and over about their experiences of weight-loss programmes. The team found that the men often associated dieting with being denied the food they enjoyed, and they were reluctant to commit to programmes they saw as requiring significant sacrifice.

Men reported being most successful at losing weight when their dietary changes had been orchestrated by their partners, or when they were supported by them. The men were more likely to reject programmes using the word "diet", which they perceived as more female-focused.

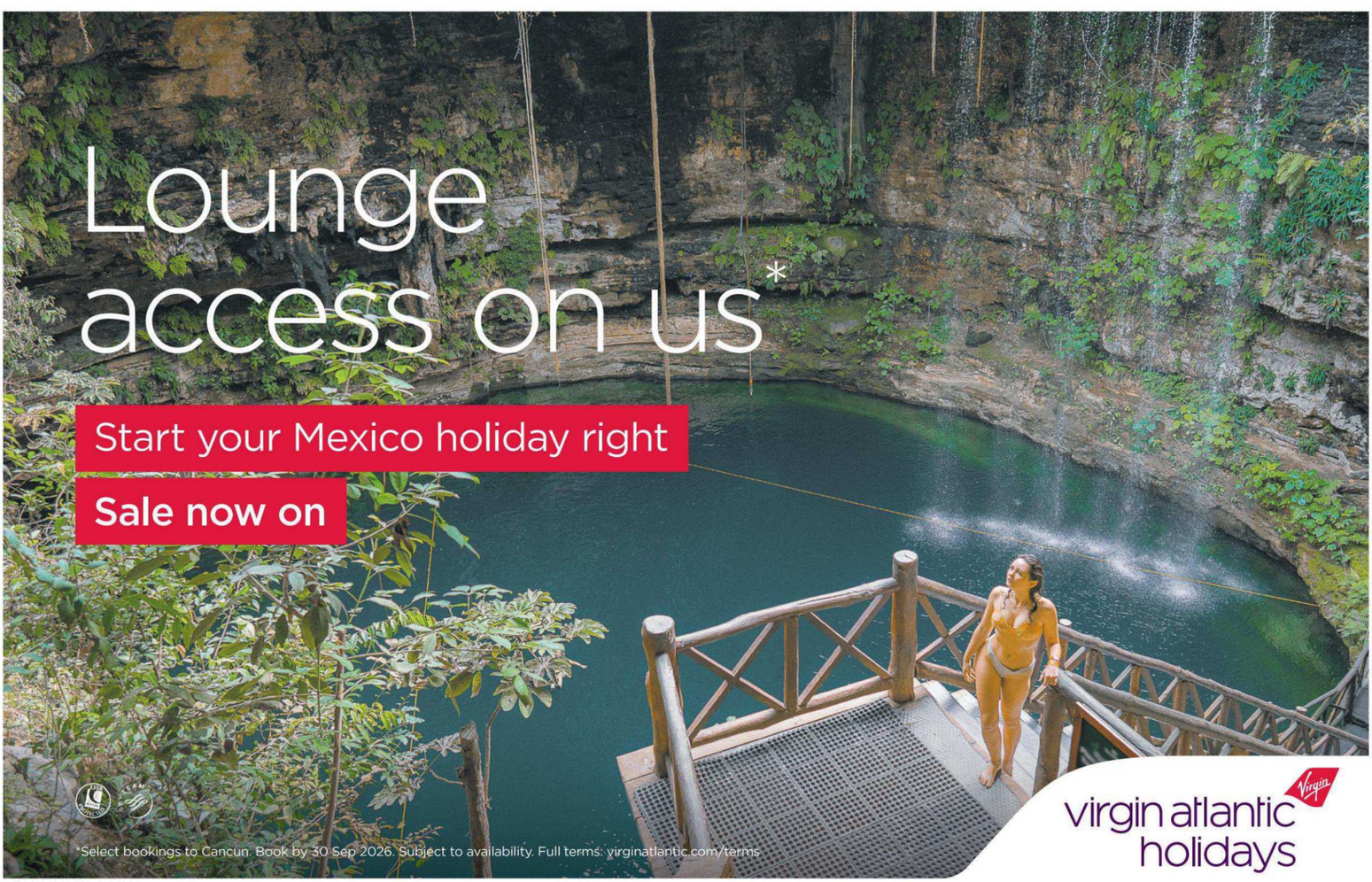
"I think diet is a very negative word because as soon as you mention the word diet everybody automatically thinks restriction, restriction, restriction," one participant said.

Emphasising competition, drama and aesthetic goals could help to entice men into weight-loss programmes, the scientists said. Justin Roberts, the co-lead author and a professor of nutritional physiology, said: "We found that for weight-loss programmes to appeal to men, they should involve quick-wins, early rewards and a degree of social competitiveness around aesthetic gains, ahead of health-specific requirements. This could involve sport or physical challenges, perhaps focused on strength or stamina."

The participants also told researchers that conversations about dieting were more commonly associated with women — and they would feel self-conscious and uncomfortable engaging in this talk themselves. However, Roberts added: "The support of spouses was found to be especially helpful, while participants also found having a 'buddy' or mentor was also beneficial."

The news comes after the launch of the Wegovy pill and the approval of a new weight-loss pill, Foundayo.

Sunny Dhain, clinical director at the pharmacy the Family Chemist, said just 25 per cent of patients starting Wegovy tablets were men. He added: "Rather than storing injectable medication in the fridge or planning injections around travel and social occasions, a daily oral treatment may offer greater discretion for people who prefer to keep their healthcare private. This ... may be a deciding factor for some men."



WELCOME TO AMERICA

World-class football gave many a reason to visit the US – what they found beyond the final whistle was the real discovery, says **Joseph Furey**

For 39 days this summer, football drew its own map across North America. Supporters learnt the names of railway stations, airport terminals and neighbourhood bars as they moved among 16 host cities in Canada, Mexico and the United States.

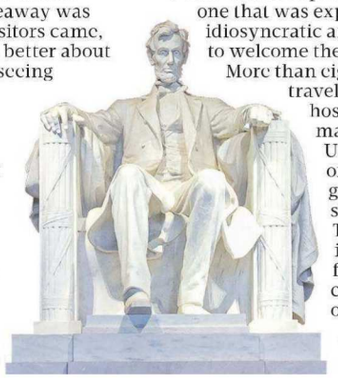
Across 104 matches, a record 6.8 million people passed through the turnstiles. Yet the tournament told a larger story: what international visitors discovered once the fixture list stopped setting the itinerary. They arrived through the gateway cities, then began asking what lay beyond them.

Geoff Freeman, president and chief executive of the US Travel Association, addresses those visitors in an open letter. "This summer, the world came to America, and America was glad to see you," he writes. The strongest takeaway was not simply that visitors came, but that many felt better about the country after seeing it at ground level.

Research among recent international visitors bears that out. Nine in ten were satisfied with their trip, 83 per cent said they felt welcome and six out of ten returned home with a more favourable opinion of the United States. For many, the people they met were as memorable as the places they saw.

The evidence came in small, human forms. Directions were given. Recommendations became conversations. Strangers offered advice and sometimes a place at the table. In Lawrence, Kansas, where Algeria based its team, a marching band learnt the Algerian anthem and local artists made a flag. Hundreds waited in the dark to welcome the players to town.

These were not grand gestures issued from a podium. They were everyday acts of hospitality, acted out in diners, shops, stations and neighbourhoods. Freeman calls ordinary Americans "the country's greatest ambassadors". After the tournament, visitors performed a diplomatic role of their own, sharing an America less visible in political coverage: one that was expansive, idiosyncratic and delighted to welcome them.



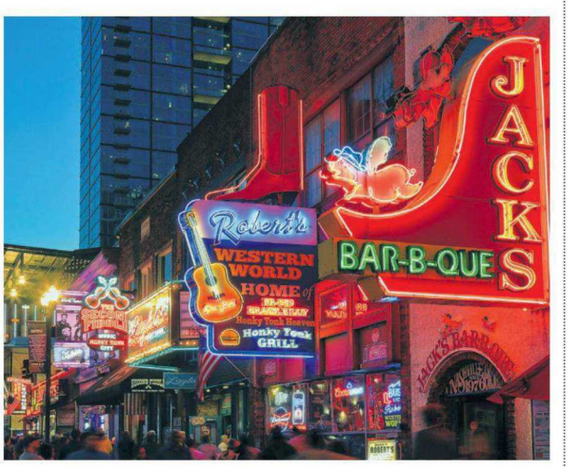
More than eight in ten travelled beyond the host cities. That matters because the United States is not one holiday – its gateway cities are simply beginnings. The difficulty is choosing from several countries' worth of possibilities. A week could be urban and car free; a fortnight might unspool along two-lane highways; a longer trip can combine a city, a landscape and a region with its own food, music and history. The trick is not to "do America", but to draw a line through it.

That line might follow trains along the northeastern seaboard, a road through the deserts, the dark skies and high plateaus of the Southwest or the musical geography linking New Orleans, the Mississippi Delta, Memphis and Nashville. It might lead instead to a Great Lake, a Maine harbour, an Appalachian trail or a town encountered because lunch, weather or curiosity altered the plan. America's scale is part of the attraction, but so is the rapid change in character from one place to the next.

America's welcome starts long before the first hello. US Travel works with industry and government to make the journey feel considered from the outset: shortening visa waits, speeding up customs, modernising airports and supporting the technology and infrastructure that help people move through them with confidence. The ambition is simple: to make a visitor's first impression of the country as inviting as what follows.

The value of that work reaches far beyond the arrivals hall. When entry is straightforward and onward connections are easier, travellers are freer to look beyond the gateways and build richer itineraries, exploring smaller cities, distinctive neighbourhoods and communities they might otherwise miss. A smoother journey does not simply bring more people into America – it helps them experience more of it.

The football has moved on, but its lesson remains: headlines can shape an expectation, but only a visit can test it. To those considering a trip, Freeman's invitation is simple: "The door is open, the welcome is real, and there is so much here waiting to be discovered."



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Two held after girl, 7, and aunt die

Ben Ellery Deputy Chief Reporter
Herbie Russell, Sian Bradley
Eleanor Tait

Two men were arrested on suspicion of murder after a seven-year-old girl and her aunt were killed in a house fire yesterday morning.

Valentina Foster and Natalie McDonald, 34, died in tbe blaze near Middlesbrough. The suspects, aged 23 and 31, remained in custody last night.

There were concerns that the fire might be linked to the series of violent incidents surrounding the A66 crash on Saturday that killed seven people, including two police officers.

Lisa Kirton, McDonald's mother, told The Times that her daughter "had a heart of gold [and] would give anyone anything. She left behind a daughter with no parents ... her father died two years ago so this child is not in a good way." Kirton said her 15-year-old granddaughter and a friend "kicked out the glass from the back-door window" to escape the fire.

She described Valentina, the daughter of McDonald's husband's brother, as "a very cute girl" who was "one of the family", adding: "She had been staying at the house for the school summer holidays."

She said her daughter's husband had been put in an induced coma.

"There is speculation that the fire was caused on purpose but I don't really know much about what happened," Kirton added. "We live opposite and were woken up at about 5am and there were people getting dragged out of fires when we were there at the scene.

"We were waiting for Natalie to come out and after about three hours police told us she had died."

Police said a 48-year-old woman was in a critical condition at the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI), and that three others were being treated for non-life-threatening injuries.

The fire took place roughly 2km away from the scene of Saturday's crash, in which a Volkswagen Passat travelling the wrong way on the A66 hit a police car.

Detectives investigating the events leading up to the crash have arrested 17 people for offences including possession of a firearm and participation in an organised crime group. Superintendent Emily Harrison said after the fire that police "were keeping an open mind and cannot rule out any links to wider organised crime at this time".

One online tribute to the victims said: "Life is so cruel my beautiful granddaughter Valentina. Your dad will be waiting for you." Another read: "RIP to those who have been tragically taken from this world. I hope they catch who did this and they rot in prison for the rest of their lives."

Cleveland police were called to a house on Birchington Avenue, Grangetown, at 5.23am yesterday.

Ciara Randle, ten, said she "woke up to screaming, dogs barking and sirens" and saw the house "smouldering".

One woman wept as she said: "It's so sad. The little girl used to be my neighbour." Another resident who lives near the scene said: "This area has suffered so much loss over the past few days. It's tragic."

On Saturday, police officers chased a Passat after the vehicle, believed to be using cloned plates, triggered automatic number plate recognition cameras.

Officers aborted the chase after seven minutes when the Passat began travelling the wrong way down the A66 in South Bank. About ten seconds later, at 3.39am, the vehicle collided with PC Matthew Blades and PC Tom Clough's marked police car, which was going in the right direction. The officers were not involved in the pursuit but were in the area "to assist with the search", investigators said.

The five Passat occupants killed in the collision have been named as Michael Robert Cahill and Jacob Matusiak, both 23, Makai Saddington, 18, and Theo Rae and Cole Worthy, both 17.

On Tuesday it emerged that a house rammed by a car hours before the fatal crash on the A66 belonged to Worthy's father, Gye Worthy.

Neighbours said they heard a loud bang at around 2am on Saturday. The house, in the Acklam suburb of Middlesbrough, was severely damaged.

Police said they had received reports of two cars driving dangerously early on Saturday, including a Volvo XC60 that was seen ramming properties. It is believed to be linked to the Passat.

There is no suggestion that Gye Worthy, 39, was involved in criminal activity but neighbours said that his home had been targeted repeatedly.

Two of the 17 people being investigated in connection with the events leading to the crash have been named.

Kai Beattie, 19, of Redcar, appeared at Teesside magistrates' court charged with possession of a firearm with intent to endanger life. Cameron George, 26, also of Redcar, was remanded in custody to appear at the court on September 21, charged with drugs offences and possession of criminal property.

The scene of the blaze in Grangetown, near Middlesbrough, where Valentina Foster and Natalie McDonald, below, died. A vigil took place nearby yesterday in memory of Makai Saddington, Theo Rae and Cole Worthy, who died in the A66 crash

HRT may cut women's dementia risk

Eleanor Hayward Health Editor

Women who take hormone replacement therapy to ease menopause symptoms are 16 per cent less likely to get Alzheimer's disease, a study has found.

A team at the University of East Anglia (UEA) followed 183,000 postmenopausal women in the UK for 13 years, and found rates of dementia were significantly lower among those on HRT.

The effect was strongest when HRT was started between the ages of 46 and 55. Experts said this period was a critical "window of opportunity" to get the most benefits and protect the brain.

HRT is taken by 2.8 million women in England and is given as pills, patches or gels. It provides oestrogen to replace falling hormone levels during the menopause, which starts on average at the age of 51. HRT is the first-line treatment on the NHS for symptoms such as hot flushes and night sweats.

Women are twice as likely to develop dementia than men, and research suggests this is partly due to hormonal changes during the menopause that cause a loss of brain tissue.

The study, the largest of its kind, used data from the UK Biobank to examine whether HRT could mitigate this and protect the brain. Overall, women were 10 per cent less likely to get any type of dementia if they used HRT, compared with those who had not. They were 16 per cent less likely to get Alzheimer's disease, the most common type.

Starting HRT soon after symptoms began was most beneficial and those who started taking it aged 51 to 56 had a 23 per cent reduced risk.

Professor Anne-Marie Minihane, leader of the study and director of the Norwich Institute of Healthy Ageing at UEA, said: "We found that HRT is especially beneficial for women who have gone through a surgical menopause, for example after having their ovaries removed. In this group, those who used HRT were around 26 per cent less likely to develop dementia."

The research also found HRT had greater benefits in cutting dementia in women with the APOE4 gene variant, which raises the risk of Alzheimer's.

Professor David Llewellyn of the University of Exeter, a co-author, said: "Rather than asking simply whether HRT affects dementia risk, we've been able to identify which women are most likely to benefit, and when."

The study is observational, which means it cannot prove cause and effect. The benefits of HRT must also be balanced against risks, including a higher chance of developing breast cancer.

Dr Susan Kohlhaas, of Alzheimer's Research UK, welcomed the study and called for further research into HRT.

The study was published in the journal Alzheimer's and Dementia.

US approves 'monumental' drug for pancreatic cancer

Kelly Rissman New York

A pancreatic cancer drug shown to nearly double patients' average survival times has been approved for use in the US. Daraxonrasib is a tablet that can be taken once a day by adults with metastatic pancreatic cancer who have already tried chemotherapy.

About 67,000 people in the US and 11,500 in the UK are diagnosed with the disease each year. Historically, treatment options are limited and it is often detected late, making it one of the deadliest of the major cancers.

It has a five-year survival rate of about 13 per cent but many patients die within a year of diagnosis, according to the American Cancer Society.

Daraxonrasib targets the protein RAS, which drives tumour growth in most patients with pancreatic adenocarcinoma, the most common type. It is made by Revolution Medicines to be sold under the brand name Rasonque.

In a clinical trial involving 500 adults with metastatic pancreatic adenocarcinoma, participants who took Rasonque lived for a median of 13.2 months, compared with 6.7 months among patients who received standard chemotherapy. Side-effects included a rash, diarrhoea, nausea, fatigue and vomiting.

Mark Goldsmith, chief executive of Revolution Medicines, told The Wall Street Journal: "This is a monumental opportunity for patients and their families." The company said in July that the European Medicines Agency was reviewing the drug. The UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has yet to say if it will too.

JAS LEHAL/PA

Nosing ahead Joey the racehorse meets a visitor at St James's Churchyard in London during one of many events across the country for National Racehorse Week

Father said his NHS surgery was a 'murder'

Barry Keevins
David Brown Chief News Correspondent

An NHS patient who died after being operated on by a surgeon banned by a private practice asked his daughter who had "murdered" him, an inquest heard.

Arthur Craig, 77, died in June 2024, 12 days after an operation at the Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton. A scan had shown a large mass in his stomach and two tumours were found during the operation by Marc Lamah, a senior colorectal surgeon.

The initial cause of death was given as sepsis caused by a perforated bowel.

One of Craig's six daughters, Cathy Craig, a professor of experimental psychology at Ulster University, told the inquest in Horsham, West Sussex: "It's heartbreaking to see your father ask you who murdered them ... He wanted to know what had gone wrong."

Lamah was suspended by Nuffield Health in 2023 after a third of his patients experienced a "moderate harm event" over a 12-month period. The rate should be less than 5 per cent.

Lamah told the inquest he had been a surgeon for 25 years and that in Craig's case the risks were about 5 per cent from the operation or "100 per cent of dying from this cancer".

The hearing continues.

Gates: Reserve jobs for humans, not AI

Mark Sellman
Technology Correspondent

The world will need to create "human-reserved" jobs that are protected from AI automation, Bill Gates has said.

The Microsoft co-founder said these ring-fenced roles would act as a buffer for the labour market and preserve the need for human connection in certain roles. Gates floated the idea in a 6,000-word essay on the risks and opportunities of the technology.

"AI will either be the greatest equaliser ever invented, or the worst source of injustice," he wrote in a piece urging governments to act faster. "Unfortunately, right now we are not preparing for it ... there is no plan to ease the entry into the AI era." He also called for the creation of a new international framework for AI governance and stressed the need to tax AI "tokens" and robot employees as jobs were eroded.

Gates said he believed that the tech industry was deliberately downplaying the threats because of the scale of the financial investments. "They're now saying to each other, 'Hey, man, don't say that. It's bad for us — the next trillion dollars we're trying to raise,'" he told The New York Times.

It is his first significant public intervention since his links to Jeffrey Epstein came under renewed scrutiny. Gates or his staff met Epstein 30 times after the financier's conviction for child sex offences in 2008, a review found.

Gates said that his contact with Epstein was a "huge mistake" and he was motivated by his desire to raise money for philanthropic causes.

In his essay, *The Turbulent AI Era*, the billionaire said that the jobs which would be "human reserved" would vary by country. He wrote: "I like the phrase 'human reserved' because it makes me think of nature reserves — places where we could put buildings and roads but we choose not to because the loss would be too great. In health, for example, imagine a robot giving you the awful news that you have an incurable disease. There's no technical reason why it couldn't. Yet it shouldn't."

Despite the debate among economists about the overall impact of AI on the labour market, Gates was convinced that while "there will be some new jobs ... without the right policies there will be far fewer than exist today".

He said that "the jobs at most risk are entry and mid-level, and the new jobs being created will mostly require skills that take many years to learn".

He also predicted a bigger impact on blue-collar work than currently anticipated, as "many Americans I talk to don't realise how fast dexterous robots are advancing because much of the advanced work is being done in other countries, primarily China".

Other AI threats Gates highlighted included cybersecurity, bioterrorism and the possibility that it "could stunt our kids' development and replace human relationships".

Despite this, Gates said he believed AI could be a boon for vulnerable populations in healthcare, agriculture and education and would accelerate the discovery of medicines for HIV, TB and malaria, as well as helping to find solutions to climate problems.

OpenAI's struggles, pages 40-41

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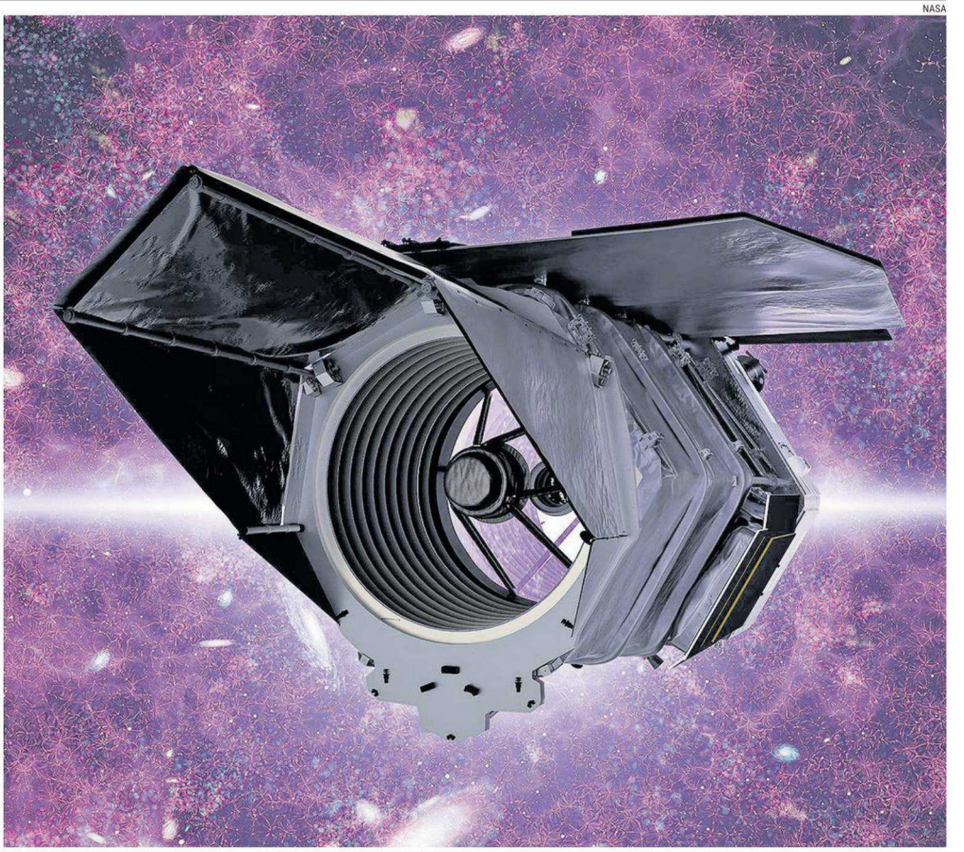
Nasa's latest telescope to shed light on dark universe


NASA

The $4.3 billion telescope, named after Nasa's first chief astronomer, Nancy Grace Roman, left, is set to launch on Sunday

Rhys Blakely Science Editor

At 12.26pm UK time on Sunday, all being well, a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket will rise from the Florida coastline. It will be carrying Nasa's next great observatory: the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope, a $4.3 billion instrument built to confront some of the deepest questions in astrophysics, including why the cosmos is flying apart at an accelerating rate.

Named after Nasa's first chief astronomer, it belongs to the same lineage as the Hubble and James Webb telescopes. Its 2.4-metre primary mirror is the same diameter as Hubble's, but Roman's roughly 300-megapixel wide field instrument — essentially a vast digital camera — can capture an area of sky at least 100 times larger than Hubble, while retaining roughly the same detail. Webb can peer deeper into the universe, but Roman can capture far larger swathes of the heavens. The result will be akin to replacing a telephoto lens with an exquisitely sharp panoramic camera — an ability that Julie McEnery, Roman's senior project scientist at Nasa's Goddard Space Flight Centre, said would make Roman a ground-breaking "discovery machine".

Over its five-year primary mission, Roman is expected to reveal 100,000 new alien worlds and measure light from nearly a billion galaxies. In four months, Roman should beam back as much scientific data as Hubble accumulated during its first 30 years in orbit.

"A year from today, we're going to have a different understanding of the universe," another Nasa scientist said.

Roman's origins are unusual. In 2012 the National Reconnaissance Office, the American agency responsible for spy satellites, gave Nasa an unused 2.4m telescope mirror. Its original purpose remains classified.

Nasa has adapted it for astronomy, coating its surface with an extraordinarily thin layer of silver, allowing it to reflect the faint near-infrared light that Roman is designed to see. The hand-me-down will now be used to investigate one of the biggest mysteries in astrophysics.

According to modern cosmology, most of the universe is invisible. Ordinary matter — stars, planets, humans and so on — accounts for about 5 per cent. Roughly another quarter is thought to be dark matter, and most of the rest is attributed to dark energy. Neither of these has been directly detected.

Scientists infer the existence of dark matter through gravity. Stars at the edges of galaxies move too quickly to be explained by the matter we can see, while galaxy clusters bend light more strongly than their visible mass should allow. Something unseen appears to be supplying extra gravity.

Dark energy is stranger still. In the late 1990s astronomers discovered that the expansion of the universe is accelerating. "Dark energy" is the name given to whatever is causing this. Recent observations of millions of galaxies have found hints that dark energy may have changed over time. "We have a standard model that is exquisite at describing the properties of the universe ... but there are hints of a problem with that model," McEnery said. "Roman will tell us if our model is wrong."

Its wide view will be crucial. Gravity bends light, an effect known as gravitational lensing. This means that matter between Earth and a distant galaxy can distort the far galaxy's apparent shape by a tiny amount. By measuring distortions, astronomers should be able to map the invisible web of dark matter and trace how it has grown over billions of years. That will reveal the balance between two opposing effects: gravity pulling matter together and cosmic expansion pushing it apart. In doing so, Roman should offer one of the clearest tests yet of what dark energy has been doing, and whether the standard model has to be rethought.

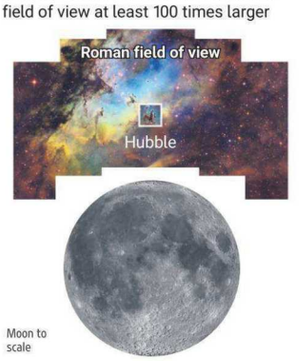
Roman is also expected to help find thousands of exoplanets, or worlds orbiting stars other than the sun, by examining how the light of stars in alignment is slightly warped by other heavenly bodies.

The telescope is expected to send about 1.4 terabytes of scientific data to Earth every day, more than 500 times Hubble's daily haul and about 24 times that of Webb. The first proper images should arrive about the turn of the year.

Whenever it peers out for one purpose it will inevitably catch other things — very possibly phenomena never seen before. "The most exciting science from Roman will be a surprise," McEnery said. "Something we couldn't predict — something that will set the stage for the next stage of deeper questions."

A wider view

The Roman space telescope has the same resolution as Hubble but with a field of view at least 100 times larger



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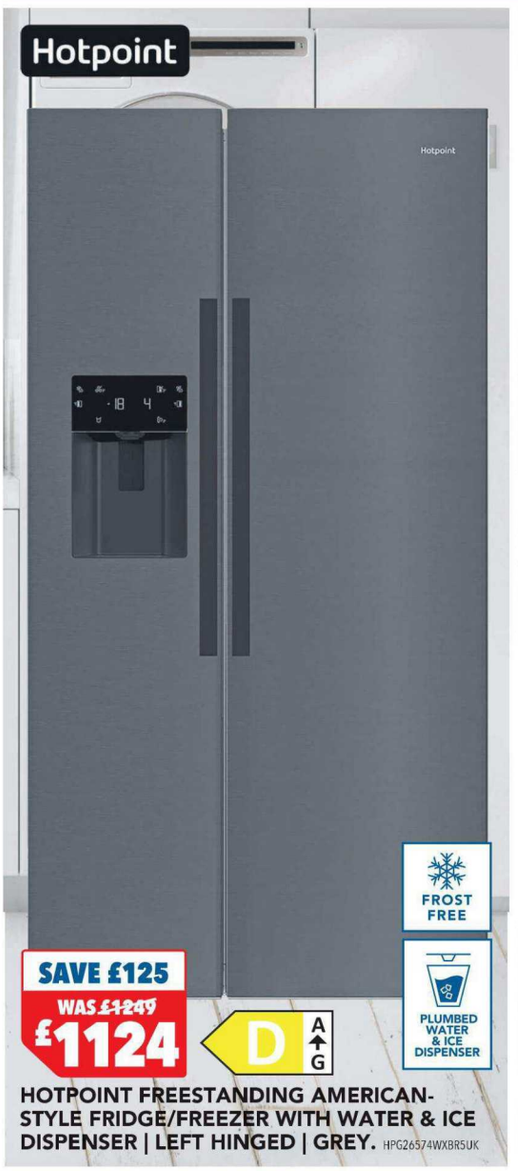

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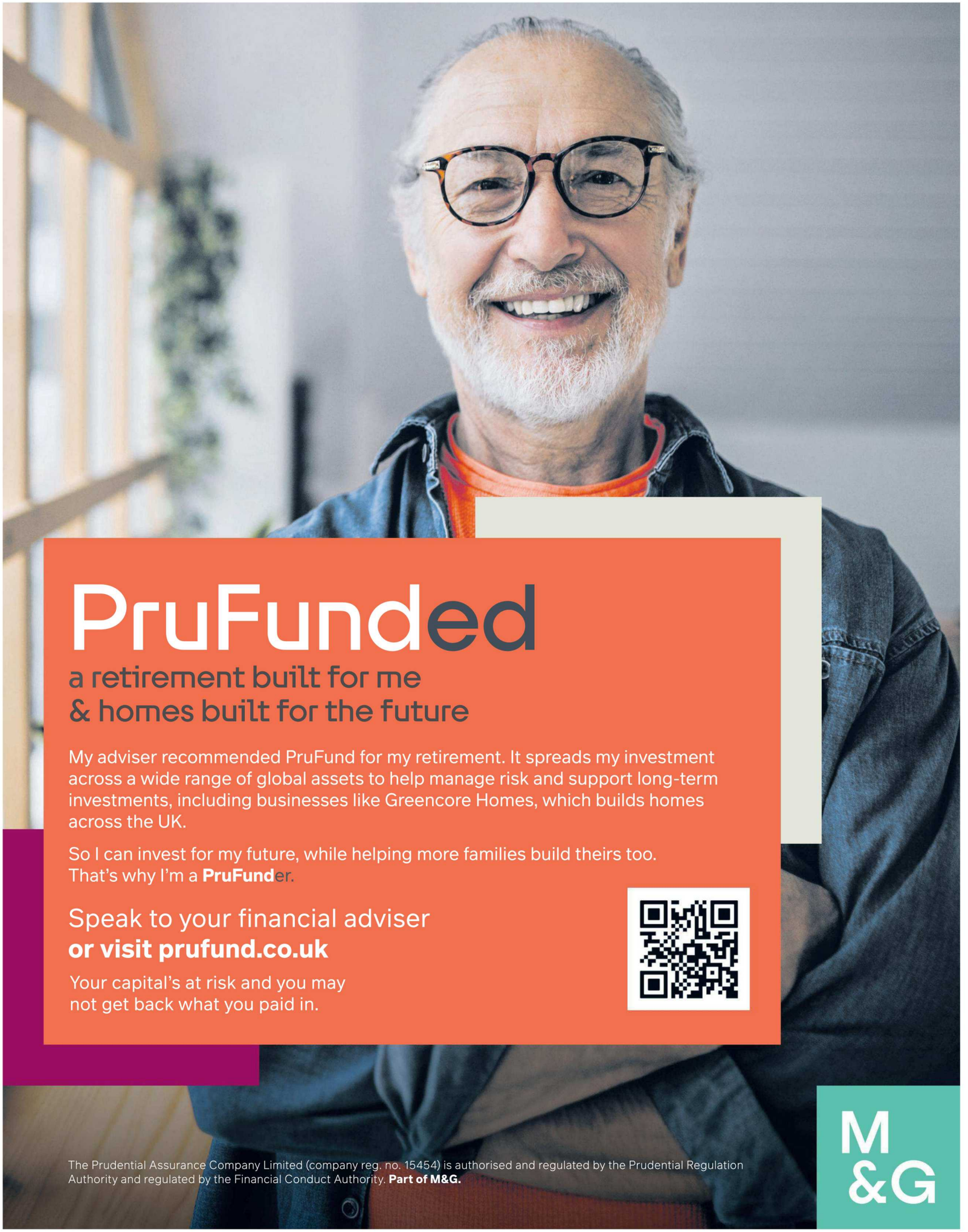

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Did a minister lie about her tribute to 'joyriding' killers?
Nick Timothy
Page 24

Comment

Why Vance sounds like a left-wing firebrand

Both US parties are converging on the economics of inequality as workers rage against an elite seen as the 'Epstein class'

James Kanagasooriam

JD Vance stood before construction workers this week and invoked Huey Long, Louisiana's idiosyncratic Democratic populist. The choice may have appeared eccentric but it was the latest nod in word and imagery to reorient the Republicans towards the working class. As governor of Louisiana, then a senator in the 1920s and 1930s, Long fought Standard Oil and launched the "share our wealth" movement under the slogan "every man a king", which Vance borrowed.

Long wanted to rein in the super-rich, capping fortunes at about $1 billion in today's money, offering a guaranteed household income, old-age pensions, free college and stipends for families earning less than one third of the average wage. An unlikely inspiration for a potential Republican president, even if Vance had repurposed Long's words to make a more classic partisan argument about crime and immigration. I reckon Vance knew exactly what he was doing: signalling he understands the likely shape of defeat the Republicans face this November.

The polls suggest that huge losses from economically precarious working-class voters will cost Republicans control of the House and seats in the Senate. Polling from my firm Focaldata suggests the Democratic lead among voters very concerned about unemployment has grown ten percentage points since 2024 — and the same among those concerned about the rise in cost of consumer goods, petrol and energy. Democrats sense this working-class unease. Candidates aligned with the burgeoning Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) movement, buoyed by figures such as the congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and the New York mayor, Zohran Mamdani, have won primary races across different states. The DSA has shifted the policy conversation towards the same left-populist ground that Long talked of a near-century ago. DSA debating topics include trade unions, wealth taxes, inequality, anti-trust and anti-tech sentiment, rent caps and how politics is funded.

On the Republican side, one of the US think tanks behind this convergence on working-class issues is called American Compass, whose chief economist, Oren Cass, has deep ties to Vance. Cass has sought to orient Republicans towards rebalancing the economy in favour of industry and manufacturing, and a better deal for workers rather than tax cuts. Its touchstone topics include board representation for workers, tariffs and reshoring. Cass gave a talk in the UK last year and I would not have been able to surmise any Republican inclinations from his economic beliefs.

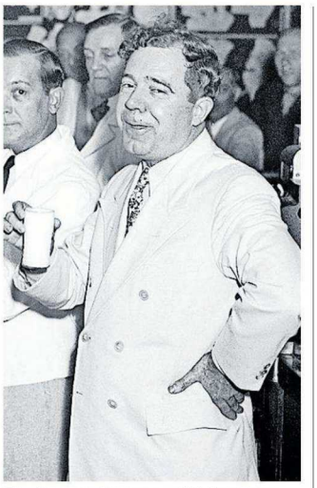
> Titans of finance and big tech may find the next decade chilly

There are limits to this convergence, for sure. Democrats still favour redistribution, wealth taxes and higher current spending; Republicans emphasise production over consumption and state-directed capital investment. The parties may also have different working classes in mind: for Democrats it is downwardly mobile urban graduates; for Republicans it is skilled workers buffeted by globalisation. But America's technology and finance elites may find the next decade chilly, whichever party is in power.

How did American politics end up in an arms race towards left-flavoured economic populism? I think it's because the key question is increasingly about where power lies. There's a growing consensus that America is governed by a tight web of coastal elites drawn from finance and tech, and voters don't like it.

Nothing symbolises this mistrust better than the revelations around Jeffrey Epstein, succour to populist claims that America is run by those who don't have its best interests at heart. Jon Ossoff, a Democratic senator for Georgia, has talked of the "Epstein class". When we polled this loaded term with the definition of "a ruling class for the ultra-rich who play by a different set of rules", 49 per cent of Americans thought the term and the description fair versus 28 per cent who thought not. All voter groups except hardcore Republicans showed similar levels of agreement. So it's no surprise that Ossoff is edging up in polling for the Democratic presidential nomination.

The other angle of elite mistrust is growing scepticism about AI companies, their founders and the vast temples they are erecting — data centres. All have suffered a reputational backlash in the past couple of years, akin to the way banks were tarnished by the financial crisis. Voters obviously worry about bread-and-butter matters too. Our latest polling puts net approval of the Trump administration's handling of inflation at minus 47 per cent. The maverick economist Marvin Barth, whose career stretches from onetime Alaskan fisherman to the Federal Reserve and US Treasury, thinks these two factors are intertwined, arguing that the Epstein revelations have worsened the perceptions of inflation among Republican voters.



The Depression-era politician Huey Long wanted to put a cap on fortunes

The proximity of Republicans to reputationally compromised elites is reflected in polling. When we asked which figures American voters regarded as most Republican-coded, they answered (in order): billionaires, members of the local country club, CEOs and investment bankers. Some Democrats are trying to learn lessons from the last presidential race and temper aspects of the social liberalism that hampered them. Ocasio-Cortez and others have decried aspects of that "Woke I" agenda as "mad". This evolution is significant: removing issues of identity and migration from the political foreground is a large part of why left and right populism are starting to rhyme on the economy. This convergence is partially visible in Europe. The offshoot BSW party in Germany combines the radical economics of Die Linke with conservative positions on identity. Fidesz, which ruled Hungary for 16 years until this year, and France's National Rally — favourites to take the presidency — are both parties of the nationalist right that shifted leftwards on economics.

> Europe's left and right are starting to rhyme on economic issues

Rereading Huey Long's "share our wealth" speech is to be reminded that he believed the rich could become rich only if they took from the poor. A recent academic paper in the American Economic Review suggests that such zero-sum thinking is the godfather of populism, driving it on both right and left. The only hope America's leaders have in maintaining their standing? Demonstrate that America's still booming economy doesn't just serve and enrich them; and show that big tech provides more security than uncertainty to everyone's lives. Their behaviour thus far shows they are not yet up to the challenge.

James Kanagasooriam is chief research officer at Focaldata

Juliet Samuel is away

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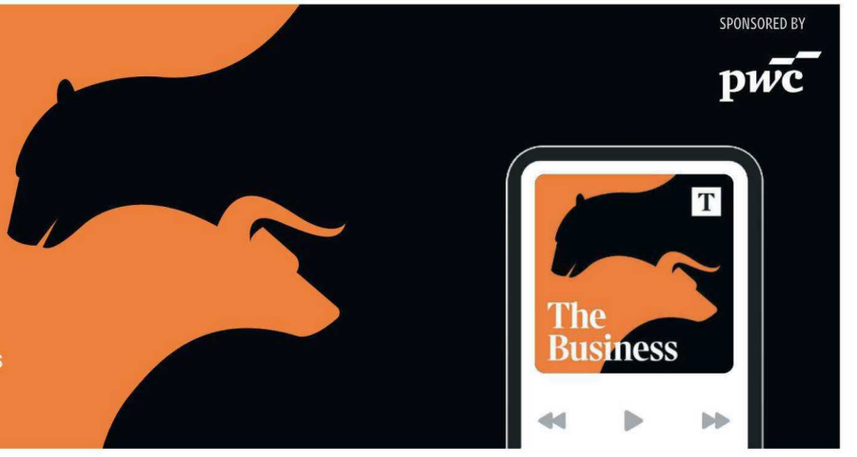

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Comment

Putin could test Nato resolve at any moment

As Russia cranks up its sabotage campaign, the US is distracted and Britain's defence is flimsy

Edward Lucas

@EDWARDLUCAS

Why did John Ratcliffe, the director of the CIA, make an unannounced but conspicuous flying visit to Moscow this week? No official explanation is forthcoming, so outsiders are parsing the details.

Why the CIA boss and not one of the Trump cronies who usually talk to the Russians? What was the significance of the brief stopover in Riga, the Latvian capital? Why didn't he meet President Putin? One possibility is that this was a negotiating gambit on the Ukraine war to follow backstage efforts by the Vatican's top diplomat. Another theory is that Ratcliffe was trying to woo Russia away from supporting the regime in Tehran, which is the US administration's chief headache.

Most likely is that Ratcliffe was delivering a face-to-face warning to the Russians. His spies and other intelligence sources have been warning repeatedly in recent weeks that Russia is planning to test Nato with an attack somewhere in northern Europe. This would not be full-scale war: that risks uniting Nato. Much better to divide the alliance, with something — a drone strike, a brief land incursion, a devastating cyberattack — that the country or countries affected will treat as an existential threat but which Nato allies, chiefly the US, would downplay and try to deal with diplomatically.

This arson attack on Nato's credibility would be a logical escalation of a campaign of sabotage and other mischief in Europe. Recent headlines include a drone carrying an explosive device being found at Leipzig-Halle airport in Germany after other discoveries there. Actual explosions hit big arms manufacturers in Italy and Bulgaria, as did a firebomb at the Estonian defence company Milrem Robotics. Sweden found two Russians with walkie-talkies camping near the holiday home of the boss of the defence company Saab;

> Something sinister is brewing and it may involve Kaliningrad

bodyguards are becoming a routine precaution for these industry chiefs.

The smuggling of migrants through tunnels dug under the Belarus border — which would be impossible without the consent of the pro-Kremlin authorities in Minsk — has intensified. As we know, illegal migration hits public confidence in the state's competence. Russia has also been probing Romanian and other countries' air defences.

In Britain, Russian-orchestrated attacks are becoming routine: assassinations, cyberattacks, arson and propaganda stunts among them. Russia may well wish to respond to Andy Burnham's visit to Ukraine by testing the new prime minister's resolve. A former Russian deputy defence minister, Andrei Fedorov, recently hinted at "semi-military" attacks on British factories making drones for Ukraine.

Something sinister is clearly brewing. It may involve Russia's Kaliningrad exclave, sandwiched between Poland and Lithuania. In recent days, some of Nato's most advanced surveillance and electronic-warfare planes have been circling the region in a US-led operation that also involved land and naval forces. Though most of the Russian ground troops have left Kaliningrad for the war in Ukraine, the 390th Naval Reconnaissance Station, a special forces unit based at Parusnoye near the main naval base of Baltiysk, has been beefed up in recent years.

Another worry for Nato neighbours is the up to 100 nuclear warheads stored there. The supposedly secret bunker can be found on Google Maps, where a review says sardonically: "employees were not friendly, will not return". Nuclear sabre-rattling has been a favourite Putin tactic before. He could resort to it again. A further possibility is a Russian stunt on the remote Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard.

Coupled with the Nato exercise around Kaliningrad, Ratcliffe's visit to Moscow would make sense as part of a pre-emptive message from Nato that the US is still committed to Europe's security and will respond unhesitatingly if an ally is attacked. The Riga stopover was perhaps a nod to frontline states' fears of becoming bargaining chips in an east-west deal.

But, just as when Ratcliffe's predecessor went to Moscow in 2021 to warn Putin against invading Ukraine, the Kremlin seems in no mood to listen. Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov downplayed the visit as a spy chiefs' powwow of no wider significance, stressing there had been no meeting with Putin and there were "no planned contacts" with the US administration. Russia believes it is in a winnable war of military attrition with Ukraine and of political attrition with Kyiv's western backers. We will get bored, tired — or, if the stunts succeed, scared; Ukraine will run out of soldiers and money, and then Russia will get what it wants.

Ratcliffe, a Russia hawk, is a far more serious figure than the underwhelming and unsuccessful envoys to whom Trump usually entrusts his Russia policy, his son-in-law Jared Kushner and the real estate developer Steve Witkoff. Ratcliffe's personal support for Ukraine has translated into a continuing flow of intelligence from the CIA, despite Trump's waywardness. But it is the commander-in-chief who goes to war.

Russia sees other weaknesses too. Britain, like our allies, is pitiably short of air defences. Our military planning (if you can call it that) relied on obtaining extra stocks of precision-strike munitions and air-defence interceptors from the US if needed. But those American stockpiles have shrivelled during the war with Iran.

We are also woefully unprepared for attacks on our critical infrastructure. Next year Britain is holding its first home defence exercise since Cold War days, and updating the "war book", which gives crisis-management instructions to the public authorities. Too little. And quite possibly too late.

Janice Turner Notebook

Sizing up a nuclear plant is like a trip into space

Having gazed out at our local nuclear facility for years, it was strange to be inside. Not, alas, in the spooky white orb where uranium atoms are split but at least walking along high metal gantries in the deafening turbine hall.

To take a tour of Sizewell B you must book weeks in advance, so EDF can check you're not a terrorist. Then, in hard hats, hi-vis, ear-defenders and gloves, you pass through airport-style security on an "empty pocket" site visit. No phones allowed, nor even a pen.

Reassurance was the core message. Carved into a boulder in the entrance is the motto "Safety is our overriding priority". (I'm reminded of Labour's "EdStone".) Police with sub-machineguns saunter around. "If someone was up on a roof, they would shoot," said our guide, "though not to kill." Staff can be given booze or drug tests at any moment and those who fail are fired on the spot. It was fascinating, like visiting a space station, with busy men in colour-coded boilersuits performing mysterious tasks. And as a non-science person (the tour's sole woman) I was struck by how the fuel may have changed since James Watt's day, but nuclear is still just steam power.

At the outflow where fish sucked into the cooling system are expelled — 85 per cent still alive, we were told — seagulls hovered for easy pickings. They will have to fly further for Sizewell C, due to be operational in the mid-2030s: rising sea temperatures mean the pipe will be a mile or so out, where the deeper water is still reliably cold.

Dome comforts

When locals were consulted about Sizewell B in the 1980s many said they didn't want another grey concrete building on their beach, like the ugly, hulking Sizewell A. So advice was sought from the Fine Arts Commission, which proposed the dome be panelled white and the surrounding buildings clad in electric-blue corrugated steel to match the sea and sky. And so Sizewell B looks mysterious, maybe sinister, but is not an eyesore.

Our guide, happy to badmouth Sizewell C next door (since it is mainly government-owned, with EDF having only a minor stake) said the new power station, a double reactor with several domes, isn't concerned about aesthetics.

A shame, given that the immense footprint of Sizewell C is truly shocking up close: thousands of trees and miles of hedgerows ripped up, fields concreted over for staff accommodation, new roads and a train line. You have to focus on the engineering feat, the necessity of new infrastructure, remember that in 40 years nature will have healed, otherwise this despoiling of a magical coast would pain your heart.

Blue with envy

In fact, grey, decommissioned Sizewell A — which won't be taken down until 2077 — is a better colour match for the North Sea than Sizewell B. At the end of our holiday, we left Suffolk for Bude in Cornwall, where the Atlantic was a sparkling cerulean and suffered severe ocean envy. Even in a heatwave the North Sea never achieves true blueness. Mostly it is a dour gunmetal grey or a murky, uninviting khaki. We explain to visiting friends it is usually shallow, used to be part of Doggerland, that several large rivers empty into it, whose mud and silt are churned about by the waves. But they always struggle to believe it is clean. A utilitarian not a romantic sea.

Privy boys

Our hostess in Cornwall runs a tight domestic ship. When we arrived she showed us the house's only bathroom, then opened the back door to reveal a prettily painted wooden hut. "In there," she said, opening the door to an all mod-cons privy, "is for men's poos." Who would dare disobey such a blunt entreaty? In fact, men in our party didn't object at all, preferring somewhere where they could linger undisturbed, away from female judgment, scrolling their phones in perfect peace.

@VICTORIAPECKHAM

THUNDERER

Did a minister lie about her tribute to 'joyriding' killers?

Nick Timothy

When five young thugs sped the wrong way down the A66, they knew the danger they posed to others. Seasoned "joyriders" with 37 convictions between them, they smashed into an oncoming police car, killing PC Tom Clough and PC Matthew Blades. Had the five not also died, they would almost certainly have been charged with manslaughter.

There is clearly no moral equivalence between the police officers who were killed and those who killed them. So I was taken aback on Monday when I saw a social media post by Anna Turley, the local MP who is also a Home Office minister. Turley said she wanted to "pay her respects to the seven people whose lives were tragically cut short". Explaining my surprise on X, I said: "We may live in an age of emoting, but we should see the difference between right and wrong. It doesn't feel right for a Home Office minister to put two police officers on a par with the thugs who killed them."

Turley then made an extraordinary claim. In a letter to

> Anna Turley claims police told her to pay her respects to thugs

me, she said: "Cleveland Police had specifically requested that I pay tribute to all victims." But this makes no sense. First, police forces do not tell MPs and ministers what to say in these situations. Second, she was free to do as she chose.

Are we really expected to believe that the local police force, which had just lost two of their own and who knew the history of the joyriders, wanted a "tribute" to the killers? When asked by journalists, the force refused to comment, and the police and crime commissioner — a Labour politician — denied it.

This may seem an unedifying row after a terrible event. Nobody likes to speak ill of the dead, and the police officers have left grieving families. But these questions matter. Has Turley lied about the police asking her to pay tribute to the killers? If so, her position as a minister is surely untenable.

More importantly, it is wrong to put the killers on a par with their victims, for practical as well as moral reasons. Relatives of the thugs are blaming the police for giving chase in the first place. Graffiti abusing the police has appeared nearby — and the authorities have refused to take it down for fear of a backlash.

If we want to regain control of the streets from thugs like this, and their friends and family who seem unrepentant, we cannot cower before them any longer.

Nick Timothy is shadow justice secretary

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Tate brothers are emblems of a deepfake age

If the lifestyle of the swaggering manfluencers is largely an online fantasy, they've a lot in common with Rupert Lowe

Hugo Rifkind

@HUGORIFKIND

When I interviewed the manosphere influencer Andrew Tate for this paper back in 2022, the trappings of extreme and serious wealth were all around. We sat in a wood-panelled room, he smoked expensive cigars. Next to us was a large safe, glass-fronted like a booze fridge, full of watches, jewellery and ingots of silver and gold.

Outside there were supercars. I couldn't tell you what sort of supercars because, being apparently a low-status and beta cuck failure who could never pick up a hot 19-year-old Ukrainian model in a Dubai nightclub (really; we discussed this extensively) I don't care about supercars at all. Still, they looked expensive.

And yet one thing really nagged at me. Which was that all this was happening somewhere near Bucharest in a converted warehouse that from the outside could have passed for a not terribly salubrious abattoir. Meaning cars and safe aside, the whole place was probably worth less than my own house.

Now fighting extradition to the UK on sex charges, Tate and his brother Tristan are residing in a prison in Miami. From the outside, who knows, maybe it looks slightly nicer. Last month, because of their alleged extreme wealth, US prosecutors argued they should be denied bail, mentioning a $50 million superyacht the brothers were reported to have bought, mysteriously, with cryptocurrency. "Andrew Tate and his brother appear to have the financial means, and the will, to continue evading justice," they said.

This week, in a frankly hilarious turnaround, we saw their defence. It is that they made it all up. The cars were leased and they were being paid to advertise the boat. The multiple passports they once flashed on screen — Nigerian, Polish, Mexican — were supposedly made of cardboard. The subterfuge, continued their lawyers, was basically a marketing scheme to sell online courses about getting rich. Meaning it was "in their interest to portray themselves on social media as uber-wealthy". You might call it being hoist by your own tacky and ultimately rented petard.

Some caution here is wise. The manosphere is a dreadful, damaging, exploitative place and there's an obvious glee in seeing any bit of it fall apart. Yet although one cannot say much at this stage about the sexual crimes of which they are accused, it would not be surprising to see a similar defence there; that the misogyny expressed by Andrew in particular was mere role-playing too. Really? Think of John Updike's brilliant line about celebrity, that "the mask eats into the face". Think, also, of the oft-quoted line by Maya Angelou, that "when people show you who they are, believe them". Just maybe not when it's about their cars.

The Tate story has a long way to go. What grabbed me most this week, though, was another line from their lawyers about why all this was necessary. "The outrageousness of the posts by them and about them is the point. The more hyperbolic and outlandish the post, the more likely it will generate views and likes." This is true and perhaps a little obvious but it's not often you see it stated so plainly. It's also not just about the Tates.

> Remember: it's not really their world. It's just their Instagram feed

This week, you may also have seen reports about the extensive reach on social media of Restore Britain's Rupert Lowe, the MP for Great Yarmouth. Not for a moment would I suggest he and the Tates are the same deal, not least because he's definitely on the record as personally owning at least one Porsche. Apparently, though, he is also far more successful online than any other MP, to the extent that his posts on X may soon earn him more than his MP's salary. Which, he has said, he donates to charity.

Why so successful, when other more mainstream politicians flounder? Noticing that he has the support of Elon Musk, who owns X, defers rather than answers the question. The usual retort would be that he has just struck a chord; that he is telling the truth when others fear to, and that other politicians need to damn well catch up. If that were true, though, why the huge mismatch between his online success and the real world?

Restore sits at 4 per cent in the polls, not despite his online success but because of it. One thrives for exactly the reasons that the other does not. Again, "the more hyperbolic and outlandish the post, the more likely it will generate views and likes". But perhaps not much else.

Somehow we keep missing this. A certain sort of politics will surge online — mass deportations, anti-vax, eat the rich, all the kids are communists now, whatever — and we steel ourselves for a revolution that never comes. Even in America, surveys will tell you that most people voted for Donald Trump because of prosaic concerns about immigration and the economy rather than because they massively enjoyed his mad capitalised Truth Social rants. In their enjoyable fury, though, neither friends nor bitter foes quite want to hear it.

The Tates are an extreme case. Yet there is something in their story that seems to sum up all of the wild, addictive, mendacious madness of the internet age. They are every deepfake, every catfish on a dating site, every perfect influencer with a far better life than you. They are every post-truth pronouncement from a political podium that drives you into a seething rage. The more they all seem to thrive, the more alarming the world becomes.

You'd think we'd be better at this by now, irrespective of whether these people are selling us our dreams or our nightmares. Remember: it's not really their world. It's just their Instagram feed. Without the gift of our credulity, maybe there's almost nothing there at all. Maybe just an ugly warehouse and a rented car.

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Letters to the Editor

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Accountability for British policing

Sir, David Spencer's contention that the College of Policing is the unaccountable policymaking body of chief constables is incorrect ("Ministers, not chief constables, must lead policing policy", Thunderer, Aug 25). The college's board is appointed by the home secretary and includes representatives of all ranks of policing, elected police and crime commissioners and independent non-executive directors. Only two of its members are chief constables. The Home Office provides most of our funding, ministers sign off our codes of practice, and our leadership team regularly meets ministers and officials. The college has responded to public and political concerns with necessary reforms. We initiated the abolition of non-crime hate incidents, and we set up the recent police leadership commission that strongly restated the importance of impartial policing and a relentless focus on crime reduction.

There is a legitimate debate to be held about police performance, structures and accountability, but the claim that the service has been "filled" with "politically motivated but unelected activists" is absurd and merely betrays an ideological agenda of its own.

Lord Herbert of South Downs
Chair, College of Policing

Sir, I disagree with David Spencer that the effect of the College of Policing on police effectiveness has been calamitous. The college has played a crucial role in professionalising policing since it was established in 2013. This standard-setting professional body hosts the What Works Centre for Crime Reduction, the equivalent of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence in healthcare. The centre curates evidence of "what works" and translates it into the best guidance available.

Abolishing the college risks reversing the steady, substantial reductions in violent crime brought about through police responses to this guidance — responses rightly scrutinised by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.

Professor Jonathan Shepherd
Violence Research Group, Cardiff University

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Burnham's plan to sanction Israeli settlements

Sir, A UK ban on trade with illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories is long overdue ("'Boycott' fears over Burnham's Israel plan", Aug 26). Under the Rome statute, the transfer of an occupying power's population into occupied territory is a war crime. The argument that such a ban would inevitably extend to a ban on trade with Israel itself is a red herring.

This is a problem of Israel's making, not Britain's. If Israel wishes to preserve its trading relationship with the UK and the other states now moving towards such a ban, its government should meet its international legal obligations and halt the export of settlement goods and services. That would be a first step towards dismantling settlements that should never have been built.

Chris Doyle
Director, Council for Arab-British Understanding

Sir, While most right-minded supporters of Israel would not agree with the Israeli government's plan to promote further development and divide the West Bank, Andy Burnham's proposal to ban goods from the West Bank is fraught with peril. The list of products and technologies developed and produced in Israel is long and comprehensive, and touches almost every aspect of our lives. It includes USB flash drives, Intel processors, Waze navigation systems, drip irrigation, car safety mechanisms, medical pill cameras and flexible coronary stents.

Whatever one's views of Israel's policies, to deny our country the fruits of Israeli innovation would be harmful and pointless. Such measures would risk depriving British consumers, businesses and the NHS of the benefits of technologies developed in Israel, while doing little to influence the policies they are intended to oppose.

John Grossman
Northwood, Middx

Sir, The government's proposed ban on trade with Israeli settlements will be damaging to British Jews. It is a very short step from blaming Israeli settlers for their actions in the West Bank (which cannot be condoned) to blaming diaspora Jews who are already contending with antisemitism at record levels in our schools, on campus, in the NHS and from arts organisations and the media. Andy Burnham might do rather better if he tried to tackle Islamic extremism in Britain, which threatens not just the Jewish population but each and every one of us every day, rather than dictating impotently on Israeli policy on which he will have no impact.

Diana Davis
London W4

Sir, In saying "I know that many people feel that ... my party didn't get it right [about Israel], and I am sorry about that", Andy Burnham succumbs to the notion that protecting other people's feelings is more important than policy details, achieving policy objectives (peace in the Middle East) or what is right. The proposed boycotts will reduce the UK's influence in any peace negotiations and are fundamentally wrong.

Sharon Ross
Borehamwood, Herts

Sir, Britain benefits far more than does Israel from the intelligence-sharing arrangements between the security forces. Those advocating for this boycott should consider that one of the unintended consequences might be to make the UK less safe.

Ian Lipman
London NW11

New fiscal contract

Sir, I agree in part with Professor Ben Ansell that younger workers are overtaxed compared with older workers ("UK 'needs new fiscal contract' for ageing population", news, Aug 26). I have continued to work for almost 20 years since reaching state pension age and can think of no valid reason why my earnings should be exempt from national insurance. That said, the level of national insurance contributions for post-pension age workers should be adjusted to reflect the fact that it does not qualify for extra pension or other state benefits.

Alec Kokinis
Sheffield

Sir, When looking at this new fiscal contract, ministers should remember that many older people support other family members financially. The Bank of Mum and Dad is also the bank of grandparents supporting children and grandchildren. Many of us carry on working well past pension age, while being unpaid carers. Most volunteering is done by those in retirement.

John Berry
Countesthorpe, Leics

Democratic deficit

Sir, William Hague (Aug 25) rightly expresses concerns that devolution can override local democracy. Some of this has already happened. The borough of Halton had been part of Cheshire since its formation in 1974, always with an overwhelming elected majority of Labour councillors. In 2014 they moved Halton into the Liverpool City Region, alongside the five metropolitan district councils that constitute Merseyside, without any consultation with residents, let alone an election or referendum. Now we have to pay a local tax to the Liverpool City mayor, but see no benefit.

David Norman
Runcorn, Cheshire

Canine cafés

Sir, I couldn't agree more with Harriet Walker about overindulgent dog handling (Times2, Aug 25). I have a severe animal fur and dander allergy, and am fed up with my needs as a human coming behind those of canine babies. I have lost track of how often I've had to walk out of cafés that have become kennels. When making a restaurant booking I have to request space away from dogs. In clothes shops, dogs brush against unsold garments. And if Hannah Betts thinks dogs are of equal value to other folks' offspring, then our future is bleak.

Diane Reddish
Hampton Wick, Surrey

Free of all disease

Sir, Viv Ryan (letter, Aug 26) is understandably confused by the conflict in healthy diets adopted by different cardiologists. It is well known in the medical profession that diseases only happen to patients, not doctors, hence there is no need to worry.

Dr Philip Edmondson
Stroud, Glos

Sir, After attending a medico-legal lecture at Robinson College, Cambridge, we were offered an impressive buffet supper. I helped myself to a small portion of three different cream-laden puddings. The chap next to me turned and said: "You must be a cardiologist."

Dr Mark Stevens (ret'd GP)
Gloucester

LOST LETTERS OF A MASTER BOOKBINDER

FROM THE TIMES AUGUST 27, 2026

The Journals of Thomas James Cobden-Sanderson, 1879-1922

The fame of Cobden-Sanderson as bookbinder and as printer is not likely to fade quickly. Books bound by him at the Doves Bindery, books printed at the Doves Press, are coveted things of beauty above the reach of fashion. He was a great craftsman. But these extracts from his journals show that he was much more than a craftsman; that, indeed, he only became a craftsman in order to serve a further end.

That end was greater even than the social reform which he, with William Morris and other Socialists of his time, earnestly desired. It was a religious end; and none the less definitely religious because he had no definite religious faith and was all his life a seeker after the unknown. Cobden-Sanderson, who, like Morris and Burne-Jones, had once thought of taking Holy Orders, was of a more religious nature than either of his two models, Ruskin and Matthew Arnold. There is much in these candid and intimate journals about craftsmanship and about social reform; but first and last it is a book about the adventures of a soul in search of the ultimate truth and the ultimate good which were to give meaning to the work done in the world.

This explains the many fits of dissatisfaction which broke in upon his just delight in the beautiful things he made. Were they only "things in themselves" after all, instead of being realizations of the Vision? If he could not trust himself in this matter, still less could he trust anyone else. And so we come to his own explanation, here fully given, of the event in his life about which many readers of the book will be most curious. When he decided to give up printing he threw the Doves Press type into the Thames. He began with the matrices in March 1913. From the end of August to November 1916 he was going by night on to Hammersmith Bridge and throwing away the type itself.

"What a weird business it is, beset with perils and panics! I have to see that no one is near or looking; then, over the parapet a box full, and then the audible and visible splash ... All nights I feared to be asked by a policeman what I had got in my 'box'."

And this a man of 76.

THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

Floating bus stops

Sir, Further to your report "The zebra crossing where hundreds of cyclists fail to stop" (Aug 26), the problem in the UK is not the concept of floating bus stops but the poor execution of them. Here in Denmark, where cycle lanes and bus routes have coexisted for decades, we solve this in two ways. On major roads, we build wide, dedicated "bus islands" where passengers wait safely with full shelters, meaning you cross the cycle track before your bus arrives rather than in a frantic rush when the doors open. On quieter streets without islands, Danish traffic law mandates that cyclists must stop beside and behind a stationary bus while passengers board or alight directly from the pavement.

In the UK, you have installed cramped, narrow boarding strips where neither pedestrians — especially the visually impaired — nor cyclists have clear space or confidence in who has priority. If you want travel infrastructure to work, you need to design for the most vulnerable first, not squeeze everyone into half-baked compromises.

Michael Grant
Grenaa, Denmark

Boomer art sales

Sir, In the early 1960s, having recently graduated from Durham University and knowing nothing about art, I bought three drawings for a total of less than £100 ("Dated tastes blow hole in big boomer art giveaway", Aug 24; letter, Aug 26). This was of course in pre-student loan days, so I could just afford to buy drawings by Eduardo Paolozzi, Reg Butler and Victor Pasmore. This week I had them valued: £3,800 to £5,200 in total for the three. I am selling.

Irena Michalowska
Brighton

'Sleep debt' worry

Sir, Dr Kristen Holmes says she hasn't been ill for eight years ("The top data scientist's guide to sleeping well — and feeling 'bulletproof'", Times2, Aug 25). I'm very happy for her, but doubtless there will be Times readers who haven't been ill for 10, 20 or 30 years. Many things affect and contribute to a long and happy life, including getting enough sleep. Stressing about your "sleep debt" (whatever that means) or living a numbingly dull life where you worry about going to bed and waking up at the same time each day won't do anything except increase your levels of anxiety, and I'm sure Dr Holmes isn't recommending that.

Andrew Bacon
London SW18

Goodbye, Dolly

Sir, It is with great sadness that many of us heard of Dolly Parton's death (news and obituary, Aug 26). Not only was she the most wonderful and charismatic singer and composer but she also can be held responsible — and has my sincere thanks — for my then primary school-aged children understanding the concept of fractions. Their very skilled maths teacher described some fractions as "Dolly Partons" — ie they were bigger on the top than on the bottom. Absolutely perfect and they have never forgotten that and both are still pretty numerate. You couldn't get away with teaching like that now.

Susan Pyper
West Chiltington, W Sussex

Daily Universal Register

UK: England v Pakistan at Lord's in the second of three Test cricket internationals. **Monaco:** The draw for the Uefa Champions League takes place.

Nature notes

Crack willow is a useful tree. It not only helps to prevent riverbank erosion with its dense, soil-binding roots, but it can also rebuild them by trapping sediment. Willow spilling is a traditional method of preventing and repairing bank erosion. The process involves driving freshly cut willow stakes along the length of a riverbank. Rods of the same tree are woven horizontally through these stakes to create a "basket". This basket is then filled with soil. Crack willow grows so dynamically that within a year this organic installation becomes a living revetment. Crack willow can also mitigate against floods. When growing on shores and eyots, the trees creates "hydro hedges" that slow the flow of floodwater. JONATHAN TULLOCH

Birthdays today

Lady Antonia Fraser, *pictured*, writer, *Must You Go? My Life with Harold Pinter* (2010), 94; **Rhun ap Iorwerth**, first minister of Wales, leader of Plaid Cymru, 54; **Barbara Bach (Lady Starkey)**, actress, *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977), 79; **Gerhard Berger**, Formula 1 driver (1984-97), 67; **Sir John Chisholm**, chairman, Genomics England (2013-19), 80; **Gary Cohn**, economic adviser to President Trump (2017-18), president of Goldman Sachs (2006-17), 66; **Peter Ebdon**, snooker player, world champion (2002), 56; **Sian Edwards**, head of conducting, Royal Academy of Music, 67; **Tom Ford**, fashion designer and film-maker, *A Single Man* (2009), 65; **Lord (Gerry) Grimstone of Boscobel**, investment minister (2020-22), chairman, Barclays Bank (2018-19), 77; **Sir Michael Holroyd**, biographer of Bernard Shaw and Lytton Strachey, 91; **Suranne Jones**, actress, *Doctor Foster* (2015-17), 48; **Bernhard Langer**, golfer, winner of 12 senior major championships, 69; **Dame Denise Lewis**, heptathlete, Olympic gold medallist (2000), president of UK Athletics, 54; **John Lloyd**, tennis player, former UK No 1, and commentator, 72; **Glen Matlock**, bass guitarist, the Sex Pistols, 70; **David Morgan-Hewitt**, chairman, The Goring hotel, London, 64; **Ann Murray**, honorary DBE, mezzo-soprano, 77; **Sir Hugh Orde QPM**, president, Association of Chief Police Officers (2009-15), 68; **Ange Postecoglou**, football manager, Tottenham Hotspur (2023-25), 61; **Volker Türk**, UN high commissioner for human rights, 61; **Lord (William) Vestey**, landowner and director, Vestey food group, 43; **Derek Warwick**, racing driver, winner of the 1992 24 Hours of Le Mans, 72; **Mark Webber**, racing driver, Formula 1 (2002-13), 50; **Tuesday Weld**, actress, *Once Upon a Time in America* (1984), 83; **Jeanette Winterson**, writer, *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit* (1985), 67; **Michael Wolff**, writer, *All or Nothing: How Trump Recaptured America* (2025), 73.

On this day

In **1896** the Anglo-Zanzibar War began at 9am and ended 38 minutes later — the shortest war in recorded history.

The last word

"Freedom, we find out, is not an inconsequential chucking of one's weight about, it is the disciplined overcoming of self." Iris Murdoch, author and philosopher, *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970)

Priced Out

Energy bills will rise again this October thanks to bad policies by successive governments. A rethink on net zero is a must to aid consumers and businesses

To the surprise of no British consumer, energy bills will rise again this autumn. The regulator, Ofgem, has said the price cap is going up from October 1 to £1,723, an increase for the average household of £60, or 4 per cent. This increase in the cap, which limits how much suppliers can charge households for gas and electricity, will take it to the highest level in three years. It will undoubtedly put further strain on households. If this proves to be a particularly cold winter — a possibility in this era of more extreme weather — the health and cost impact on older people will be significant.

Andy Burnham has sought to emote through these concerns, saying he recognises how "difficult" the situation is. True, the prime minister has announced that VAT will be taken off electricity bills from October. Yet the projected £45 discount will be swallowed up by the scale of this latest rise, still leaving homeowners worse off. Mr Burnham has indicated he will do more to help but his focus will be on getting prices "down in the long term". This is a depressing acknowledgment that there are no shortcuts to cheaper energy. Subsidising bills, as the UK did after Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine in 2022, would be a hiding to nothing.

The plain fact is that high bills are the natural result of decades of poor policymaking. The UK was once on the frontier of nuclear power; now it has failed to open a station for three decades. Two are under construction, at Hinkley Point in Somerset and Sizewell in Suffolk, but both have suffered from exorbitant costs and delays as a result of the sclerotic planning system. Thanks to the likes of Sir Nick Clegg, who as deputy prime minister revelled in blocking such plants, Britain delayed any action. The two stations will strengthen the constant "baseload" energy capacity, yet neither will be fully operational until the 2030s.

There have been other missteps too. Like much of Europe, the UK has reduced its gas storage capabilities. The Rough facility, which once provided 70 per cent of the UK's gas storage, was closed in 2017. When the Ukraine war disrupted distribution, 20 per cent of the facility was brought back into use. At present the UK has 12 days of gas storage, six of which are provided by Rough. There is a need for more domestic resilience in supply as well as storage. Were the government to finally approve new drilling on the Rosebank and Jackdaw oil and gasfields, it would strengthen our domestic supply amid international fluctuations.

The mad dash to net zero has exacerbated the situation, increasing costs for businesses as well as individuals. Research by the Civitas think tank argues that the rapid decarbonisation of the electricity system is one of the main reasons the UK suffers some of the highest industrial energy fees in the world — at £238 per megawatt-hour last year compared with £138 in Germany and £112 in France. It added that the high costs had been made worse by levies to pay for green infrastructure.

Miatta Fahnbulleh, the energy and net zero secretary, continues to argue that Britain must make a rapid transition to renewable energy. The reality is that a more pragmatic approach is needed instead of meeting arbitrary, costly targets. Whether Ms Fahnbulleh will do what it takes will be tested next month when she is expected to make a decision on drilling for North Sea oil and gas. This is only the first step she should take to right the wrongs of the recent past. The government must rethink a stifling tax regime that is, according to critics, making the North Sea "uninvestable". And it should embrace nuclear once more, particularly the impending arrival of cheaper small modular reactors. Only then can consumers and businesses hope to eventually see some lower bills.

Mr Burnham's predecessor Sir Keir Starmer claimed the drive to renewables would lead to bills falling by £300. It is notable that nobody in government is willing to stand by this assertion.

Performative Politics

Andy Burnham's plan to sanction Israeli settlements is a self-serving gambit

As he defenestrated Sir Keir Starmer, Andy Burnham was resolutely vague in criticising his predecessor, attempting to remain all things to all people in the Labour movement. An exception to that emollient strategy came, however, when he issued an apology for his party's initial response to Israel's military action in Gaza. Labour "didn't get it right", Mr Burnham said before promising, disquietingly, to "do better". Now in power, Mr Burnham is planning a sudden ill-advised departure from Britain's existing relations with Israel.

In an apparent effort to regain the goodwill of disenchanted leftwingers, Mr Burnham is poised to announce a "robust" sanctions regime targeting Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Such a trade embargo would be almost impossible to implement. Nor should cynically punishing an ally to woo back anti-Israel voters at home be any part of a respectable electoral strategy.

The pretext for the sanctions is the long-planned construction of 1,200 homes by Israel just east of the densely populated city of Jerusalem, a zone known as E1. The obstacles to exclusively boycotting goods and services from this area would be considerable. In practice, as Labour Friends of Israel warns, any attempted embargo would probably become a de facto ban on trade with Israel. Zealots in Labour's ranks may welcome that — though it is a bleak irony that many Palestinian businesses would be hit hard too.

However, it is the very notion that sanctions are justified in the first place that does not survive scrutiny. Ed Miliband, the foreign secretary, has branded the E1 settlement project "unacceptable and destructive", joining those who allege the new housing jeopardises the eventual creation of a Palestinian state. But those alarmist claims are overblown. There has never been any realistic two-state solution under which the E1 settlement would fall outside Israeli territory. Under the borders presented at Camp David in 2000 — when the Palestinians disastrously spurned a viable offer of statehood — E1 would have remained part of Israel. The Oslo accords, too, placed the land under Israeli administration. Yet Israel's critics still alight on every zoning decision as an opportunity to accuse it of wrongdoing.

In the absence of any real warrant for sanctions, it may be that Mr Burnham's motive is cynically domestic. Labour has shed votes to the Greens and pro-Gaza independents since it stood by Israel after the atrocities committed by Hamas on October 7, 2023. The Green Party, in particular, has been unscrupulous in courting a sinister undercurrent of antisemitic sentiment of a kind seldom seen in Britain in recent years. Many members of Mr Burnham's own party hope to pressure him into a harsher stance on Israel. At the party's annual conference next month, activists will almost certainly petition for more anti-Israel resolutions and boycotts.

Mr Burnham's effort to pre-empt their demands is a worrying sign he is willing to participate in a shoddy contest for the votes of an antisemitic faction of the British electorate. Cynically weighed, the voices of Britain's roughly 300,000 Jews are all too easily drowned out by those of a deeply anti-Israel bent who have abandoned Labour.

Such expedient thinking sets a dangerous precedent, reinforcing the impression that, for too many in the Labour Party, Britain's Jews don't count. Mr Burnham should urgently think again.

We Will Always Love Her

Dolly Parton leaves a rich legacy of great music and unparalleled generosity

From Celine Dion to Eminem, Jeff Bezos to Zohran Mamdani, President Trump to Bernie Sanders, Beyoncé to Donny Osmond, Paris Hilton to Hillary Clinton, plus the plethora of British musical knights, the sheer range of those paying heartfelt tribute to Dolly Parton is poignant proof of her popularity. She was loved and respected across the usual dismal divides of genre, generation and politics. In an America short on universally revered icons, Dolly remained one to the end.

Her breadth and depth of talent is vanishingly rare in an individual person. A natural performer, an old-school showbiz trouper, a flawless soprano, a genius at conjuring timeless melodies and witty, narrative lyrics — not forgetting her glamorous good looks — Parton was the full package as a musician. She also had the drive, dedication and discipline needed to move from log cabin to superstar status in one lifetime. What's more, she was clever, funny and shrewd, with the strength of character and vision to build her brand in a man's world 20 years before anyone had heard of Madonna. It is hard to imagine Dolly Parton not succeeding in whatever American Dream she pursued.

The Queen of Country had one other supreme attribute: a heart of gold. The extent of her philanthropy is staggering. She helped fund pioneering research into HIV/Aids in the 1980s, when the priority still sadly carried reputational risk. She gave millions to hospitals in Tennessee, raised relief for the victims of hurricanes, floods and wildfires, donated $1 million to develop the Moderna vaccine during the Covid pandemic and underwrote the regeneration of poor, largely black, urban neighbourhoods. And her Imagination Library child literacy project continues as a model of practical, purposeful charity. Dolly Parton's kindness will long outlive her, as will her greatest songs. What a total star she was.

World

You shoot down drones, Putin tells Amazon of Russia

Russia
Marc Bennetts

The Kremlin is "mobilising" Russia's economy, critics have warned after President Putin ordered the state to take control of private businesses deemed unable to defend themselves against Ukrainian attacks.

Putin issued a decree this week after strikes on about 20 warehouses belonging to Wildberries, an online retailer known as "Russia's Amazon". Kyiv's forces are also turning their attention to warehouses owned by Ozon, another online retail giant.

"It's now Ozon's turn," the Ukrainian defence ministry said at the weekend. Six of the company's logistical hubs have been hit since then, including a strike on Monday on a facility in Dagestan on the coast of the Caspian Sea. Ukraine has also struck oil refineries across Russia, creating nationwide fuel shortages that have even affected Moscow, despite the Kremlin's attempts to increase petrol supplies to the city.

Putin's decision means that the government can now temporarily take control of businesses if they are deemed not to have taken sufficient measures to protect their facilities or if they do not carry out repairs quickly enough. The decree applies to energy infrastructure as well as industrial, communications, transportation and logistics facilities. It is seen by critics as the mobilisation of the economy and a way of lining the pockets of Putin's allies even further. Alexander Kolyandr, a director at the Eurasia Group consultancy who is an expert on Russia and Ukraine, said: "It gives the state a blank cheque to nationalise basically whatever profitable businesses they want."

Since the start of the war the Kremlin has seized assets estimated at a total of more than six trillion roubles (£50 billion) from dozens of private companies, some of which were owned by businessmen with dual citizenship or foreign residence. They include Domodedovo airport in Moscow, Rusagro, an agricultural producer, and Yuzhuralzoloto, a gold producer.

President Zelensky said on Saturday that the attacks were an attempt to limit the Kremlin's ability to fund its invasion and to make the war "more tangible" to ordinary Russians. Robert Brovdi, the head of Ukraine's drone forces, said the strikes on Wildberries were an attempt to disrupt the "personal life" of those Russians "who consider themselves completely untouched" by Putin's decision to wage war in Ukraine. Although both companies sell army-style helmets and body armour, most analysts say deliveries of their products to the front line are insignificant.

The attacks on Wildberries are estimated to have caused at least one trillion roubles (£8 billion) in damage. At least ten people are said to have been killed, including seven in a strike on a facility near Moscow.

An Ozon warehouse was hit by a Ukrainian drone strike on Saturday

Yesterday one of Wildberries' warehouses in the Tambov region, 260 miles from Moscow, was destroyed in an attack that caused a massive blaze, the regional governor said. Two people were injured and locals were warned to stay at home for 48 hours due to the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Smoke was visible in Nasa satellite images.

Although it is unclear whether Putin's decree will affect Wildberries or Ozon and how widely it will be applied, Moscow has sought to calm nerves in the business community.

Denis Manturov, the Russian first deputy prime minister, said: "This does not involve nationalisation or a change in the form of ownership. The decree entails the state stepping in to manage the enterprise in order to address specific security-related objectives."

Kirill Rogov, founder of the Re: Russia think tank, said that "the fact that drones are dropping bombs is the state's responsibility" but "according to the logic of state-sponsored insanity, the fact that you are being bombed is your responsibility".

He told TV Dozhd, an exiled opposition channel: "You are to blame for being bombed because you should have defended yourselves. The fact that defending yourselves is utterly impossible, that doesn't interest anyone."

Putin's decision has also been questioned by Kremlin loyalists who say that it is unrealistic to expect private businesses to defend themselves against the Ukrainian armed forces.

Anastasia Kashevarova, a military blogger, wrote on Telegram: "If Ozon buys a Pantsir [air defence system] tomorrow, who's going to operate it, their security guard?"

The targeting of Wildberries and Ozon has been supported by Kyiv's allies in Nato. During a trip to Kyiv for the 35th anniversary of Ukraine's independence from Moscow, President Stubb of Finland said: "It's a sensible military strategy... This is the only way we are going to get peace negotiations."

A purported internal report by Sberbank, Russia's biggest bank, which was released this week by hackers, estimated the chances of a crushing Russian victory in Ukraine at 7 per cent. However, it estimated the likelihood of Russia being forced to retreat from Ukraine at only 2 per cent. The most likely scenario, it said, was a frozen conflict without a formal peace deal that could erupt again in the future.

Despite Ukraine's hopes that economic and social pressure will force Putin to end the war, the Russian leader shows no signs of backing down. He said on Saturday that Kyiv's targeting of online retailers had "opened a Pandora's box" and that Moscow would step up its strikes on Ukraine's "most sensitive economic sectors". His comments raised fears that Russia could escalate its attacks on civilian infrastructure in Ukraine by stepping up strikes on wastewater treatment plants in Kyiv and other cities before winter. Their destruction would probably cause raw sewage to flood homes, hospitals and businesses. Russia is already targeting the Bortnychi wastewater treatment plant near Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital's sole facility, in what appears to be an attempt to create a humanitarian crisis.

Kolyandr said: "There is always space for Russia to escalate."

Putin could test Nato resolve at any moment, Edward Lucas, page 24

In the soup Thousands of revellers threw overripe tomatoes at each other at the

Long haul: volunteers pull castle on journey home

Japan
Colette Fountain

There are few opportunities in life to drag a castle around by hand. But Motoharu Nakata has had two. In 2015, Nakata, 61, went to northern Japan to help volunteers drag the keep of Hirosaki Castle 80m for repairs to its walls.

Last weekend, Nakata returned to join 1,800 others in pulling the 360-tonne tower back into position. Using a technique known as *hikiya*, teams of 80 people used 30m ropes to pull the wooden keep, aided by rollers.

Spurred on by chants equivalent to "heave ho", volunteers were able to move the keep by 1.13m on Saturday. By the end of the month, it will have been dragged a total of 5m. Machinery will move it the remaining 73m.

Hirosaki Castle's 360-tonne tower was put back in position after repairs

Nakata told the Sankei Shimbun: "There's absolutely no other opportunity to pull a castle — it was fantastic."

Ebola mob beat me senseless at burial
Page 30

'Aura farming' is the new face of teenage cool
Page 31

ALBERTO SAIZ/AP

annual Tomatina festival in Buñol in Valencia, eastern Spain. Tonnes of tomatoes are delivered to the streets by lorry

Human hunters used 'deer' as codeword

Italy
Tom Kington Rome

Rich hunters who paid to shoot women and children in Sarajevo in the 1990s used the code word "deer" to refer to their human prey, a witness has claimed.

The owner of a bed and breakfast in Trieste, in northeast Italy, has alleged she put up the hunters, who she claimed were well dressed, "rich and arrogant", as they travelled to take part in the "Sarajevo Safari".

The Italian innkeeper, whose name has not been released, is the latest witness to step forward with allegations that European hunters paid huge sums to Serbian fighters to join snipers killing Bosnians trapped in the besieged city of Sarajevo during the Balkan wars.

Other witnesses have claimed the hunters paid extra to shoot children and celebrated their kills late into the night in Serbian-held parts of Sarajevo before heading home.

Magistrates in Italy have opened an investigation into the shootings using evidence compiled in a recent book, *I cecchini del weekend* (The Weekend Snipers) by the Italian author Ezio Gavazzeni, whose sources include a former Bosnian intelligence officer.

A parallel investigation is under way in Austria into suspected snipers, and magistrates from across Europe met in June to co-ordinate inquiries.

According to Gavazzeni, the Trieste innkeeper made her claims to the author and Guido Salvini, a lawyer who is acting as a civil plaintiff for the city of Sarajevo and is supplying new witness accounts to the Italian magistrates.

"She was working at the B&B in the early Nineties and was used to hunters passing through to Slovenia and Croatia who knew what animals to hunt in which seasons," Gavazzeni told The Times. "Then she started to see rich and arrogant hunters arrive with expensive clothes, watches and rifles who knew little about hunting. They said to her they would hunt deer, but she knew it was the wrong season, then realised 'deer' was a code for humans as they revealed they were planning to shoot woman and kids in Sarajevo.

"She said the hunters travelled with guides who never spoke to her and did not eat with the group."

Gavazzeni said the woman told him the hunters referred to themselves as *strelac*, the Serbo-Croat word for archer. The woman said she reported the hunters to the police at the time, but no inquiry was started.

Carney still standing after going toe-to-toe with Trump on trade

PM with mandate to defy president aims to win tariff war by acting as tough as his rival, writes **David Charter**

At the start of the year the Canadian prime minister spoke up for "middle powers", vowing to resist economic coercion by the US to bully smaller nations into submission.

Mark Carney followed through by walking away from a trade deal he said was an attack on sovereignty, incurring punishment tariffs of 50 per cent from President Trump. Carney is now being watched around the world as the first middle power to risk going toe-to-toe with Trump by announcing his own reprisal tariffs. On paper there is no way that Canada could hope to win a trade war with an economy 12 times its size, but Carney has tactical advantages that may mean his gamble pays off.

"Our government understood, before many, that America would transform all its commercial relationships," Carney said after the breakdown of trade talks last week. Trump's signature "was written in pencil", he added.

Trump imposed 50 per cent duties on $20 billion of Canadian goods and Carney announced dollar-for-dollar retaliation from September 8.

The first sign that this may be a short-lived fight came in the staging of the tariffs on both sides. The US said that vehicle duties would increase from January 1, a tactic used by Trump to allow for negotiation. Neither side has targeted the Canadian crude oil which is arguably the bulk of its trade surplus. Another clue that Trump is prepared to make a deal is his interest in reviving the Keystone XL pipeline planned to take oil from Alberta to US refineries. This was cancelled by President Biden but would fit with Trump's championing of fossil fuels.

Despite the economic pain that could soon hit jobs in Canada, Carney drew on solid political support for his actions with one poll showing 76 per cent support for walking away from the deal. Carney feels he has a strong mandate for confrontation because he owes his job to the shift in political sentiment in Canada last year over perceived bullying by Trump.

The Conservative Party leader, Pierre Poilievre, had been forecast to win the election in March last year until Trump began referring to the "great state of Canada" and its former prime minister Justin Trudeau as "governor". By the time the Liberal Party ditched Trudeau and adopted Carney the polls had turned and he triumphed, declaring that "Canada will never, under any circumstance, become part of the United States".

Trump is feeding into the same feelings, writing on Truth Social this week that "Canada wants the benefits of being a state, without being one". Carney's personal popularity is above 50 per cent in polls while Trump's ratings are at their lowest point of either of his presidencies in the low thirties. He has negative approval in 47 of the 50 states, according to Economist polling.

Trump's hostility towards Canada goes back to the 1990s and his opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement (Nafta) which he blamed for the decline of US manufacturing. He told NBC News in 1999 that he could negotiate a better deal: "I think I'd be the best ... and this country would take in lots of money from lots of foreign countries that have been ripping us off so badly." His transactional approach to international relations led him to renegotiate Nafta as USMCA (United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement), announcing in 2020 "the largest, fairest, most balanced and modern trade agreement ever" and "a colossal victory for our farmers, ranchers, energy workers, factory workers". Despite saying it was "a partnership with Mexico and Canada and ourselves against the world", this year he refused to re-sign, saying: "We'd do better as a country if we don't have an agreement."

The big change in mindset between his first and second term has been a hardening of America First into the Donroe Doctrine, a revival of the 1823 Monroe Doctrine asserting US hegemony and economic dominance in its hemisphere. This Trump administration is acting with less regard for the sovereignty of other countries, pushing migrants back into Mexico, blowing up alleged drug-running boats in the Caribbean, making aggressive claims to Greenland and seizing the Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro.

Carney is now testing the limits of the Donroe Doctrine and Trump's attempt to create a compliant sphere of influence, but aside from his political capital, the former banker has the electoral calendar in his favour. His claims that he refused to sign with the US to stand up for the French language could boost his party in elections coming up in Quebec. He is also taking a bet on the US midterms.

If, as forecast, the Democrats take control of the House of Representatives, it will become more difficult for Trump to sustain his emergency use of tariffs to coerce allies. The Democrats will try to reassert congressional control over trade deals, even as the Supreme Court considers further limits on Trump's mercurial use of clauses in decades-old trade laws to act unilaterally. Carney's gamble is that Trump's fear of the voters' verdict in November will drive the US back to talks where cooler heads will be able to reach a better deal.

Carney is testing Trump's limits

FU YUJIANGLIN/GETTY IMAGES

Smoke signals Families burn paper offerings for use by departed relatives in the afterlife during the Ghost Festival in Kaili in Guizhou province, southern China

‘I was burying Ebola victim when mob beat me senseless’

DRC

Noella Mwanza Bunia
Jane Flanagan

The crowd had gathered to bury a man who died of Ebola. In a cemetery in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo they demanded the coffin be opened, but when they saw only the man’s clothes folded on top of the body bag inside, they mistakenly thought it was empty.

“We tried to explain and calm them down, but it didn’t work and they came at us,” said Yese Ushindi, a Red Cross worker assisting with the safe burial. “I tried to run to save my life, but they caught me and beat me so badly. I do not know what happened after that.”

Ushindi, 48, who has worked with the Red Cross for 16 years, spent a month in hospital as a result of the beating. He still has frequent pain, memory loss, headaches and insomnia.

Too weak and traumatised to return to the frontline of the Ebola response, Ushindi, a married father with eight children, now cleans the Red Cross base in Bunia, the capital of the Ituri province and the epicentre of the outbreak.

A bystander filmed the attack, showing Ushindi lying unconscious on the ground, his head bleeding and his hands in their surgical gloves.

He is among at least a dozen Red Cross workers who have been seriously injured in attacks since the latest epidemic was declared in May. Ebola is now spreading across an area bigger than France, as health workers face frightened and angry communities, a rising death toll, restrictions on burials, isolation and misinformation.

Yese Ushindi, a Red Cross worker, was beaten unconscious by a crowd at a cemetery. He spent a month in hospital and says his life has been “truly destroyed”

Tensions have erupted because of a ban on traditional burial rites, enforced because the virus can spread through contact with bodily fluids, meaning corpses can remain contagious. Violence and intimidation is interfering with safe burials, decontamination, ambulance transfers and case investigations across several provinces.

“People don’t understand our role,” Ushindi told The Times. “They accuse us of bringing an epidemic, they throw abuse and stones at us. We explain our job is to protect people, but some cannot understand and some refuse to understand.”

More than 100 days into the outbreak, health teams are trying to contain the virus in some of the most difficult conditions faced during any Ebola epidemic. The virus has hit regions where health infrastructure is lacking and armed groups have roamed for decades. Fighting between rebels and government forces has driven people from their homes, while others move in search of work. Violence, poor roads and damaged bridges have left some communities beyond reach.

As of this week, more than 5,500 people had been infected and 2,642 had died since the outbreak was declared on May 15, according to the health ministry. In the harder-to-reach parts of North Kivu province, the mortality rate is 68.6 per cent.

No Ebola epidemic has spread this fast before. After 100 days, this outbreak has killed seven times as many people as the 2014-16 West African epidemic had at this point. That outbreak went on to claim more than 11,000 lives, the highest toll of any declared.

Experts believe the virus was circulating in the mining town of Mongbwalu as early as February and believe the true number of cases could be three times higher than the official count. In Ituri, most new cases are found among people who were not on lists of monitored contacts, making the chains of transmission harder to trace.

The outbreak is being driven by the Bundibugyo virus, a rarer Ebola species for which there are no approved vaccines or treatments. More than 16,000 doses of Ervebo, the vaccine used in previous outbreaks caused by a more common Ebola species, have recently arrived in the region.

The World Health Organisation says it is not known whether Ervebo protects against Bundibugyo, although early lab trials suggest it may offer some protection.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement condemned the attacks on humanitarian workers, saying they were making the outbreak response even harder. “Every personnel injured and every ambulance, vehicle, or piece of equipment damaged reduces the capacity to provide emergency health and humanitarian services.”

Ushindi said he wanted to beg the authorities for greater security and protection and was not hopeful of making a full recovery. “I received my treatment, but my life is truly destroyed. When I think about my children’s future, I just cry,” he said.

Lindsey Graham’s sister wins Senate nomination

United States President Trump cemented his status as a Republican kingmaker after Lindsey Graham’s sister was announced the winner of the party’s nomination in South Carolina’s Senate primary race.

Darline Graham, 62, a political newcomer who took over from her brother after he died last month, defeated Ralph Norman, a Congressman and right-wing firebrand, in Tuesday’s primary runoff election.

Graham’s victory reasserted Trump’s influence over swathes of Republican voters after he endorsed and campaigned for her to become the party’s candidate for the November midterm elections.

The result interrupted a losing streak for Trump, whose endorsed candidates lost ten Republican contests this cycle, including six in the previous two weeks. It in effect guarantees Graham a full six-year term representing the deep red state.

With 99 per cent of the vote counted, Graham had 52 per cent, four points ahead of Norman. “South Carolina is truly Trump country,” she said.

Graham, whose brother had held the post since 2002, had been beset by questions over how ready she was for the job. She has little political experience other than occasional public appearances with her brother, and until last month she was the commissioner for a state agency that helps blind residents.

Blaze kills 14 babies

Pakistan At least 14 newborn babies were killed in a fire at a hospital nursery in Islamabad. A grieving father said the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences had no fire security or proper exits and that all doors except one were locked. The institute’s denied the claim and said doors were manned to prevent babies from being stolen.

400,000 oysters stolen

Australia Thieves stole 400,000 oysters, estimated to be worth up to £184,000, from a farm near Taree, 200 miles north of Sydney along the New South Wales coast. Latitude 31 Oyster Co said it had lost about a third of its stock. The oysters were not ready for sale and would need to be grown for at least another four to six months, it said.

Theft of Monkey King

China A Buddhist monk has been remanded in custody accused of stealing a statue of the Monkey King from a temple in Hong Kong. Zha Jianxin, 57, is alleged to have taken the statue, valued at about £180 and depicting Sun Wukong, a deity that featured in the 16th-century novel *Journey to the West*, from the Lung Mo temple in Tsuen Wan.

Inmate ‘back from dead’

Sri Lanka A man who had been reported as dead arrived home alive and well while his cremation and funeral rites were being arranged. DM Keerthisena was reportedly in prison when police told his relatives he had died. His return home to Galgamuwa has led to demands for better communication from the authorities.

‘Aura farming’ is new face of cool

A craze that involves striking the best pose has burst out of Brazil to hook teens globally, writes **Stephen Gibbs**

ZUMA PRESS WIRE/SHUTTERSTOCK

Participants in the first “aura farming” contest in Sao Paulo, above and far left, and in Mexico City, left. Rayyan Arkan Dikha, right, has found fame with his performance on the bow of a racing longboat

For some it is the height of cool. For others it is the pinnacle of cringe. For many more, it is just baffling. “Aura farming” is a niche craze that has burst from the corners of online gaming and social media onto the streets of Latin America.

The idea is to strike a pose. And not just any pose, but one which captures the idea of a personal “aura”. Cool, composed, cocky and, ideally, effortless.

Victor Gabriel Tourinho Camargo, a Brazilian content creator known online as “Uvitinho”, takes credit for organising what was perhaps the first aura farming competition, held last month in Sao Paulo. The “farming” reference is a direct lift from gaming, where contestants accumulate, or farm, points.

“Our videos from the first competition, along with several of the participants who appeared in them, helped aura-farming competitions break out of the Brazilian bubble and reach a much wider audience,” he told The Times. The trend, he said, had since “exploded”.

In recent weeks, public aura farming competitions have taken place in Mexico, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, Costa Rica and Honduras.

Last weekend, in the historic centre of Mexico City, appropriately — or not — in front of the palace of fine arts, a large crowd was entranced by the antics of dozens of youthful competitors sizing up one another. The winner was whoever drew the loudest cheers. On this occasion, a teenager called Kaled Rosales Salazar, who mimicked lassoing his opponent, came out on top.

“Whoever looks the best, shows it off, gets the most laughs and has the most confidence wins,” said Aldhir Gonzalez, 22, organiser of the bout. The Mexico City competition offered a prize of 3,000 Mexican pesos (about £130). Other events offer no cash prize, but the bigger reward of the right to claim “infinite aura”.

While aura farming has found a peculiar appeal in Latin America, the craze’s undisputed hero comes from the other side of the world. Last year, an 11-year-old Indonesian boy, Rayyan Arkan Dikha, gained fame for performing effortlessly cool moves while balancing on the bow of a racing boat, during the Pacu Jalur longboat contest. For centuries, the race has included a child performer on the bow of the boats, to help the rowers maintain a pace. But Dikha, wearing sunglasses and improvising some sublime dance moves, took the role to another level.

Last year, “aura farming” was shortlisted as Oxford University Press’s word or phrase of the year. It defined it as “the cultivation of an impressive, attractive, or charismatic persona or public image by behaving or presenting oneself in a way intended subtly to convey an air of confidence, coolness, or mystique”.

Some have dismissed the whole phenomenon as an inanity, symbolic of a troubling lack of seriousness among today’s youth. But Uvitinho said seeing young people playing outside in an innocent competition should inspire, not horrify the older generation. “Today, children have moved from the streets to the screens,” he said. “[This] is one way of bringing our real childhood back.”

Additional reporting by Colette Fountain

Buyers find ‘haunted houses’ dead cheap

Taiwan

Jan Camenzind Broomby Taipei

On his search for a dream home, Dawson Chuang is looking for the usual things: a lot of natural light, convenient public transport, good schools nearby. But there is one more thing he has to consider: is the house haunted?

In Taiwan, where housing is becoming increasingly unaffordable and many believe in ghosts, “unlucky homes”, known in Mandarin as *xiong zhai,* have become a lifeline for those trying to get onto the property ladder. The more violent the death of the previous occupant, the lower the cost of the property. “I really don’t have much money, but I want to give my family a space of our own,” said Chuang, a father of one. “I don’t care what happened in the *xiong zhai*.”

Driven by a formidable AI and semiconductor boom, Taiwan’s economy expanded by 14 per cent in the first half of this year. But not everyone has reaped the benefits. Relative to income, houses on the island cost more than in London, New York and Hong Kong.

Xiong zhai, also translated as “haunted houses” or even “murder homes”, can sometimes cost as little as half the market rate.

Amy Peng was 36 when she bought a property in which somebody had taken their own life. “I originally bought it because it was cheap,” she said. “It was about one million New Taiwan dollars (£23,000) below the market price.”

But not everyone is so brave, and the stigma makes purchasing difficult. Banks are often unwilling to offer loans, fearing they will be unable to recover the cash if a borrower defaults. “People might see the property as inauspicious and believe it could affect their luck,” said Wu Kaiwen, a property agent.

Taiwanese society remains deeply spiritual. During the Ghost Festival, which continues until mid-September, it is believed that the gates of the underworld open and spirits return to earth, prompting some temples to leave food to appease them.

Many buyers organise a ritual to free properties from any lingering ghosts. “There may be a spirit inside that has not been properly released, so we perform a ceremony to help it leave,” said Willy Tang, a spiritual practitioner.

Top university ‘must alter every course’ to beat AI

United States

Colette Fountain

Artificial intelligence is able to credibly complete undergraduate assignments at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, one of the top universities in the world, a committee at the institution found.

A “call to action” report said the technology was expected to cause long-term disruption to education because of changes to campus culture. It said that “every subject at MIT would likely need to be re-examined and potentially revamped” to become “AI-aware”.

Sally Kornbluth, president of MIT, described the report as “a watershed for MIT and for all of higher education”.

The committee of academics found that AI had affected experiences such as study groups, office hours and undergraduate research.

The committee urged those who taught at the university to consider assessments including oral exams, portfolios and in-person conversations. It also recommended a review of the classes offered, many of which require substantial changes.

It recommended that the university makes it easier and quicker to modify courses, and to provide more places to meet in person.

World

Wild boar make meal of rabbit island

Japan
Richard Lloyd Parry Tokyo

To the tourists who visit it, Okunoshima is an idyllic place: a small, sunny island in Japan's Inland Sea, inhabited by a population of adorable tame rabbits who frolic photogenically for their entertainment.

Beneath the surface, though, "Rabbit Island" is an ecological disaster, in which the huge population of invasive bunnies are stripping the land of its vegetation and, in their turn, being killed by predatory wild boars, kites, crows and at least one human. Lurking in the background is a sinister story about the rabbits' origins in a secret wartime military programme.

In 2024, some 195,00 tourists from all over the world made the ferry journey to Okunoshima, a 170 acre island in the Inland Sea that forms part of Hiroshima prefecture. The carrots and cabbages they bring with them have caused rabbit numbers to increase into the hundreds, but the bunnies are also stripping trees and bushes.

"The ecological imprint ... is visible across the island's landscape," a group of 12 Japanese scientists wrote in a paper published this summer in the Journal of Ecotourism.

CHRIS MCGRATH/GETTY IMAGES

Tourists feed the rabbits that have overrun Okunoshima and are stripping trees and bushes

They added: "Okunoshima's current rabbit population far exceeds the island's natural carrying capacity. Within reach of their teeth, leaves and branches have disappeared, producing a 'rabbit line' analogous to the well-documented 'deer line' created by overabundant sika deer."

The same study reports wild boars falling upon Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail and dragging them away in their jaws, highly unusual behaviour among such animals.

"On March 5, 2024, around 3:00 PM, a ... boar approached two fighting male rabbits, captured one with its mouth, rolled it with its snout, knocked it against stone steps, and then carried it into the forest," the scientists write.

"When we first heard that a wild boar had preyed on a live rabbit, we were surprised," said Shingo Kaneko, a professor at Fukushima University and lead author of the paper. "Wild boars are known to scavenge animal carcasses, but they are not generally regarded as animals that actively hunt live prey."

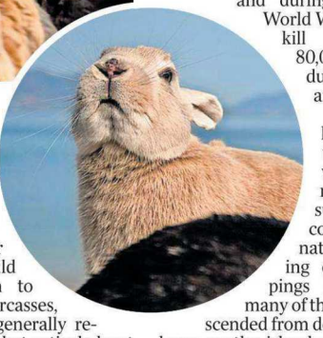
The boar have been observed to appear at the island's jetty just before ferries depart, when many visitors leave behind unused rabbit food, which is also consumed by the larger animals. This has raised concerns about dangers posed by the wild pigs to humans, which unlike rabbits sometimes attack humans.

Last month, footage went viral on social media showing a berserk wild boar that attacked and injured four men in the city of Toyota.

"Feeding the wild boars likely encouraged them to settle in the area, leading to previously unobserved behaviour," said Kaneko, who recommends the culling of boars. "We should consider the possibility that this is having an unexpected impact on the ecosystem."

Local lore has it that the rabbits are the descendants of laboratory animals from a less cosy period of the island's history, when it was the production centre for the Japanese Imperial Army's top secret chemical weapons programme.

The mustard gas, phosgene and cyanide manufactured there before and during the Second World War was used to kill as many as 80,000 Chinese during the 1930s and 1940s.



Kaneko says, however, that the genetic diversity of the rabbits does not support that as a complete explanation. DNA testing of their droppings indicates that many of them must be descended from domestic pets let loose on the island after it became known as a rabbit paradise.

The boar are not the only predators on the island. Last year, Ryu Hotta, 25, received a suspended sentence after kicking to death a rabbit and inserting scissors into the mouths of others.

Over a period of three months 77 bunny corpses were found on Okunoshima, although it is not clear how many died as a result of foul play.

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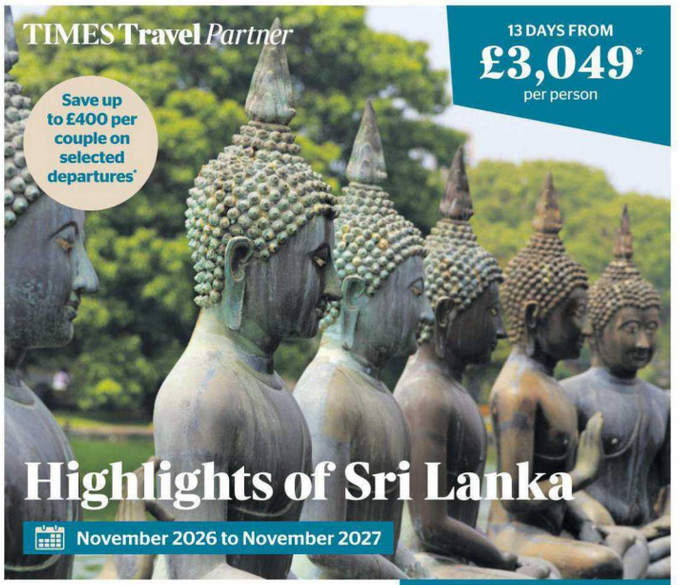

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Save dolphins plan hits deep water

France
Adam Sage Paris

When Europe's biggest waterpark closed on the French Riviera last year, animal rights campaigners hailed the end of the cetacean shows against which they had fought for a decade.

But 18 months later, Marineland's 12 dolphins and two orcas remain in limbo in the middle of a legal and political debate that has produced much anger and few solutions.

Animal rights campaigners say the cetaceans have fallen victim to a French government that prefers captivity at home to freedom abroad for them. Other observers blame the fiasco on the campaigners, saying their dogmatism has blocked exit routes for the dolphins and orcas.

This week Beauval Zoo in central France abandoned a €45 million plan to create "outdoor lagoons" for about 25 dolphins, including eight from Marineland and 11 from Planète Sauvage, an Atlantic Coast wildlife park with the country's only remaining public dolphinarium.

Rodolphe Delord, the zoo's managing director, said he had jettisoned the scheme in the face of lawsuits brought by a coalition of animal rights groups opposed to holding cetaceans in captivity. He said that Marineland's dolphins were likely to be dispatched to Asia where they would be held in conditions far worse than those planned at Beauval.

"Some associations will doubtless present the abandoning of this project as a victory," he said. "Those who opposed it now have a moral responsibility. It is not enough to oppose a solution. You have to be able to present another one which is at least as good for the animals. Beauval was the only project enabling them to stay in France."

A spokesman for Mathieu Lefèvre, the ecological transition minister, said that the project "aimed to provide a lasting, responsible French solution to the situation".

Eight dolphins were moved from Marineland to a marine park in Malaga in a late-night operation in July. The eight are only supposed to be in Spain temporarily and it is not clear where they will go now. Four other dolphins, which are still being held in a basin in Marineland, are due to be transferred to an oceanarium in Valencia, also in Spain. The French government is seeking to send the orcas — Wikie, 24, and Keijo, 11 — to a zoo in Tenerife in the Canary Islands, but Spain is yet to approve their transfer.

One Voice, which is opposed to the Beauval plan, dismissed claims that the zoo's aim had been to give the dolphins a better life, saying: "Beauval has wanted a dolphinarium for years and saw the closure of Marineland as an opportunity to get one, but they still would have been in captivity and there still would have been reproduction." It added that the zoo had planned to export dolphins born there to China.

Parques Reunidos, which owned Marineland, attributed its closure to a 2021 animal rights law that made it illegal to hold cetaceans captive in France except for research purposes. One Voice disputed this, saying that the company shut the park because of declining visitor numbers. It said that despite the law, President Macron's government continued to want to hold dolphins and orcas captive. "France is pro-captivity," she said.

One Voice has called for the Marineland dolphins to be transferred to the San Paolo sanctuary in Gulf of Taranto in Italy, which opened last year. The association says that the government has refused to back this plan because it wants to keep the dolphins in France.

Business

WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

FTSE 100
10,878.12 (-8.04) ▼

Dow Jones
53,463.88 (-113.52) ▼

COMMODITIES

Gold
$4,603.43 (-47.83) ▼

Brent crude (6pm)
$87.59 (+0.37) ▲

CURRENCIES

£/$
$1.3594 (-0.0045) ▼

£/€
€1.1664 (-0.0019) ▼

Finance boss accused of misappropriating £1.3bn had been bankrupt

James Hurley Assistant Business Editor

The boss of a mortgage lender accused of misappropriating £1.3 billion from City and Wall Street institutions had been bankrupted before the business was established, The Times can reveal.

Paresh Raja was declared bankrupt in the High Court the year before Market Financial Solutions was incorporated, it has emerged, raising fresh questions about standards in the banking and private credit industry, which went on to back the business with about £2.6 billion. Raja, the subject of a £1.3 billion freezing order over allegations that he "plundered" MFS for "vast sums", was also subject to bankruptcy-related restrictions during the period when MFS was set up.

MFS, a provider of mortgage and bridging finance, fell into administration in February after a High Court judge said insolvency practitioners needed to investigate claims of fraud.

The failure has prompted fresh scrutiny of governance in "shadow banking", or unregulated financial services firms, and of the regulated firms that dealt with it.

Administrators have claimed there is "compelling evidence of serious financial mismanagement" at MFS, with allegations that loans were "double pledged" by MFS and associated companies to property assets, resulting in a "significant shortfall" of about £1.3 billion in the mortgage collateral available to recover the loans.

Many of the underlying borrowers are also allegedly connected to Raja and his associates and there are accusations he used the funds to pay for a lavish lifestyle. Raja, 59, vehemently denies the allegations, saying there was no fraud or dishonesty and that he "categorically denies any wrongdoing".

The City regulator is examining the failure in relation to money laundering and financial crime controls.

Market Financial Solutions Limited was established by Pratibha Dewan, who subsequently became Raja's wife, in November 2006. Raja was often referred to as the founder or co-founder of MFS prior to its collapse.

The Times has learnt that in March 2005 Raja was made bankrupt following a debtor's petition — the term for when a person submits to the court that they cannot repay their debts.

The bankruptcy, understood to be related to debts of about £350,000, ended in March 2006, but Raja was then the subject of a three-year bankruptcy restriction undertaking until March 2009; this is when a debtor has been deemed to be dishonest or to blame for their debts, a small proportion of which

Continued on page 34

Revenues at Nvidia more than double

Chipmaker beats forecasts despite AI scepticism

Louisa Clarence-Smith
US Business Editor

Nvidia's second-quarter revenue more than doubled year-on-year to $96.2 billion, beating Wall Street's expectations amid increasing scepticism around the sustainability of the artificial intelligence boom.

The world's largest semiconductor company reported a 126 per cent rise in profit to $59.7 billion, ahead of analysts average estimates of $51.6 billion.

Nvidia also forecast quarterly revenue above Wall Street estimates yesterday in a sign that big technology companies are still spending heavily on its chips to power their AI ambitions.

The company expects third-quarter revenue of $108 billion, plus or minus 2 per cent, compared with analysts' average estimate of $104.2 billion.

Despite beating the earnings forecast the shares fell $3.39, or 1.6 per cent, to $209.66 in after-hours trading following the results, valuing the business at $5.1 trillion. The stock has risen 12.4 per cent since the start of January and 850 per cent over five years.

Jensen Huang, Nvidia chief executive, said: "AI has reached its inflection point. It's doing useful work. Its tokens are productive and profitable."

He said "demand is accelerating", adding: "This time last year, one lab was driving the build-out; today we have a golden age of new AI labs and start-ups, multiple frontier labs scaling in parallel, a thriving open-model ecosystem, and physical AI coming online with strong momentum around the world."

Nvidia did not assume any data centre chip sales from China in its outlook.

Nvidia was launched in 1993. Its chips are now used by more than 35,000 companies, from carmakers and drug-discovery businesses to weather forecasters and social media giants.

The bullish results come even as many of Nvidia's customers, including Amazon and OpenAI, have started making their own chips.

Investors are increasingly nervous about an AI bubble as the biggest infrastructure build-out in history faces uncertainty around future demand, and scepticism around so-called circular deals, whereby Nvidia finances and takes stakes in companies and developments that use its chips.

Huge optimism around the transformative powers of AI for businesses also comes amid high inflation, a growing public backlash to data centres and rising global geopolitical risks.

In a post on X last week, Lloyd Blankfein, former chief executive of Goldman Sachs, said: "Risk management 101 — every exposure should have a limit, even when you're sure nothing could go wrong. After all, the Titanic sank and AAA mortgage bonds went to zero. I worry about the market's (and the economy's) unlimited appetite for exposure to the positive AI revenue story."

Last week Nvidia said it would provide a guarantee of up to $105 billion to help OpenAI lease a sprawling data centre in Ohio. It also said it would invest $1.5 billion in SB Energy, the SoftBank-owned developer of the data centre project.

BACKGRID

Flying visit Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and his wife, Lauren Sánchez, land at Olbia in Sardinia, Italy, on their way to lunch with the vice-president of the UAE

Macquarie drops KPMG from audit

Helen Cahill Financial Correspondent

One of Australia's biggest investment companies has dropped KPMG as a potential auditor as the firm faces "scrutiny" by the country's parliament.

Macquarie Group said it would no longer recommend the appointment of KPMG Australia as its auditor at its annual shareholder meeting, and would instead maintain PwC in the role. The audit generates almost A$75 million (£40 million) a year in fees — one of the country's most lucrative.

The Sydney-based group, which is both a bank and an asset manager, made the decision after a committee of Australian legislators launched a public inquiry into the mishandling of whistleblower complaints at KPMG's division in the country. The KPMG unit has also faced allegations of misuse of confidential documents.

The inquiry by Australia's parliamentary joint committee on corporations and financial services held hearings this month, during which James McClelland, one of KPMG's top lawyers, said his internal investigation into data misuse was undermined by colleagues providing "misleading, if not directly deceptive" answers to queries.

The committee launched its investigation after it was approached by a whistleblower who claimed that KPMG Australia ignored concerns flagged for almost two years.

In a statement, Macquarie said: "The decision follows continued scrutiny of KPMG Australia's audit practice, including information exposed by the parliamentary joint committee on corporations and financial services. It also follows Macquarie's formal inquiries of KPMG, as well as the impact of ongoing issues at KPMG Australia."

John Sams, who has been appointed chief executive of KPMG's Australian business to deal with the current crisis, said: "Today's announcement by Macquarie is a clear reminder that the consequences of our past failings are real."

Need to know

1 The boss of a mortgage lender accused of misappropriating £1.3 billion from City and Wall Street institutions had been bankrupted before the business was established. Paresh Raja was declared bankrupt in the High Court the year before Market Financial Solutions was incorporated. Page 33

2 One of Australia's biggest investment companies has dropped KPMG as a potential auditor as the firm faces "scrutiny" by the country's parliament. Macquarie Group said it would no longer recommend appointment of KPMG Australia as its auditor at its annual shareholder meeting, and would instead maintain PwC in the role. Page 33

3 The former scaffolder who set up sports supplement maker Applied Nutrition has seen another upgrade to annual sales and profit guidance as he eyes a £1 billion valuation for the firm. Tom Ryder, who founded the business in 2014, saw its shares rise more than 9 per cent yesterday.

4 A key measure of US inflation was stable at 3.3 per cent in July, in line with forecasts and helping the US Federal Reserve's "wait-and-see" approach to raising interest rates. The core personal consumption expenditures (PCE) index, was unchanged at 3.3 per cent over the year, and rose by 0.2 per cent between June and July. Page 36

5 Volkswagen's bosses and labour leaders dug in before a critical board meeting next week as its chief executive pushed for deeper cost-cuts and unions rejected layoffs and plant closures in its biggest-ever restructuring. Europe's largest carmaker is considering measures that could double the planned number of job cuts to up to 100,000. Page 38

6 Ministers are refusing to publish the impact assessment setting out the estimated cost of the US-UK pharmaceuticals trade deal following calls from backbench MPs. The government agreed to double spending on innovative medicines over the next ten years in exchange for a three-year tariff exemption on pharma exports to the US. Page 39

"All sorts of businesses discriminate using price between customers every day

Ryan Bourne, page 37

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Supplement firm bulks up

Guy Taylor Retail Correspondent

The former scaffolder who set up sports supplement maker Applied Nutrition has overseen another upgrade to annual sales and profit guidance as he eyes a £1 billion valuation for the firm.

Tom Ryder, the fitness enthusiast from Liverpool who founded the business in 2014, saw its shares initially rise more than 9 per cent yesterday, with the group citing "sustained demand" across its range of protein powders, sports supplements and energy drinks.

Those gains reversed later, however, with the stock closing down 5p, or 1.6 per cent, at 316½p amid concerns about an anticipated drop in margins.

Applied Nutrition has a market capitalisation of more than £800 million and was one of the biggest of London's class of 2024 listings.

Over a remarkable 12-year journey, the company has secured backing from well known investors including Coleen Rooney, the wife of the former England footballer Wayne Rooney; Peter Cowgill, the former chief executive of JD Sports; and Mohsin Issa, co-founder of EG Group, the petrol forecourt empire . Applied Nutrition products are sold in more than 85 countries globally and it employs more than 270 people.

Yesterday's update marks the third time Applied Nutrition has raised revenue guidance this year despite headwinds from the Iran war, which has put pressure on consumer spending and disrupted shipping in certain parts of the Middle East. The shares have risen by about 90 per cent over the past 12 months.

The protein shake maker said it now expects annual earnings before interest, taxation, depreciation and amortisation (ebitda) to be ahead of consensus forecasts of £42 million. That would mark a 40 per cent year-on-year increase on the £30.9 million reported last year. Revenue is also expected to be ahead of expectations, up by 50 per cent to £160 million.

Analysts at Berenberg described momentum at the company as "impressive", although they noted an expected drop in margins in fiscal 2027.

Applied Nutrition said this reflected an increased revenue contribution from the US, coupled with "significantly higher whey protein costs and a greater proportion of sales from whey-based products".

Growth in whey protein prices has been fuelled in part by the rise of GLP-1 weight loss drugs, which have driven users towards more protein-heavy diets to offset increased muscle loss. According to DCA Market Intelligence, prices of food-grade whey powder in north-west Europe rose to a record high of roughly £1,456 per tonne in April, more than 50 per cent higher since the start of the year. Some experts have warned of potential shortages.

Applied has been marketing GLP-1-friendly ranges to capitalise on growing demand, including creatine and liquid collagen pouches and "digest capsules" featuring enzymes, probiotics and fibre to "promote digestive comfort" and "gut health".

The company has also been expanding rapidly into the US market, recently securing a £12 million acquisition of Nutrablend Group, a nutrition specialist based in Buffalo, New York. The deal was accompanied by a new licensing tie-up with the confectionery giant Mondelez International that will see Applied develop sports nutrition products under the Sour Patch Kids and Swedish Fish confectionery labels. A new range will be stocked in 2,200 Walmart stores this year.

The Berenberg analysts said: "We remain positive, noting that while some additional revenue streams will be margin dilutive, they should be profitable and cash-generative. That said, for Applied Nutrition to retain its premium valuation rating, management will need to show that underlying margins remain healthy and stable."

Net cash at the end of fiscal 2026 was £15.9 million, down from £18.5 million the previous year, following the Nutrablend acquisition.

For the 2027 financial year, Applied is expecting adjusted ebitda to grow by 12 per cent year-on-year to about £49 million on revenues of £205 million, with both comfortably ahead of current consensus forecasts of £42 million and £186.2 million, respectively.

Coleen Rooney is one of the celebrities to have backed the protein shakes, whey

Iran conflict dents traffic at Gatwick

Robert Lea Industrial Editor

Gatwick reported half-year profits fell by nearly a fifth with fewer passengers using the UK's second-largest airport as the Iran war hit international travel.

The airport, owned in a joint venture by Vinci, the French construction firm, and BlackRock, the US investment house, said 19.1 million passengers passed through its terminals in the first six months of the year, 4.7 per cent down from the 20 million a year earlier.

The biggest fall in passenger numbers was on flights to Europe and especially those in the eastern Mediterranean. In a statement, the airport said: "Capacity reductions from some ultra-low-cost carriers, combined with the ongoing situation in the Middle East have impacted overall passenger numbers in the first half of the year.

"Some destinations with a perceived association with the conflict in the Middle East, including Cyprus, Turkey, Greece and Northern Africa, experienced weaker-than-expected demand."

Gatwick said that load factors — the calculation of how full planes are flying — in the April to June trading quarter were lower than last year. It continued: "Notably there is an increasing trend in passengers delaying their decision to book flights until much closer to their date of departure.

"Concerns over fuel supply have been highly publicised in the UK and have likely impacted passenger behaviours. However, there have been no issues with fuel supplies so far."

Research by Chase, the financial services firm, estimated that 25.2 million Britons opted for a domestic holiday this summer, a 40 per cent increase on the prior year, with the Lake District and Cornwall the most popular.

Gatwick posted higher top and bottom lines for the six months to the end of June. Rising airport and traffic charges for airlines, which are passed on to passengers, led aeronautical income to rise to £252 million, accounting for nearly half of group revenues, which came in at £515 million — a rise of nearly 5 per cent. A marginal fall in income in the terminals' shopping and hospitality malls was offset by a rising take from car parks and charging drivers to drop off travellers.

The rising cost of serving its £3.7 billion net debt pile, plus significant accounting movements on property valuations and financial instruments, meant that Gatwick reported pre-tax profits of £136.5 million for the six months to June 30, down 18 per cent from £166.2 million a year ago.

A Court of Appeal ruling this month paved the way for development of Gatwick's second runway. The court dismissed a bid by campaigners to challenge a High Court ruling in June that the scheme could proceed.

Pierre-Hugues Schmit, chief executive of London Gatwick, said: "We are excited about our longer-term growth opportunities and with the legal process for the northern runway programme now complete, we can turn our focus from planning to detailed design work and delivery."

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Finance boss accused

were to casinos. Such orders prevent people from acting as a director, or forming, managing or promoting a company without the leave of the court.

Raja did not become a director of MFS until July 2017, after which date there was expansion in its activity.

Raja declined to answer questions about the bankruptcy or the subsequent restrictions, including whether the lenders that backed MFS were made aware of it.

The bankruptcy emerged after inquiries by Paresh Dabasia, MFS creditor and an executive of the MFS Creditors Action Group, which represents some private investors exposed to MFS.

He said: "I picked up the phone to the Insolvency Service and had the details in four minutes. It cost me nothing, but as far as I can tell, not one bank lending into this business ever made that call. That is a colossal failure. We call on the FCA to investigate what went wrong and how it should be put right."

Barclays backed MFS and related entities with close to £600 million and also operated its account. The bank pre-

for £1bn valuation

APPLIED NUTRITION

powder and other products from Applied Nutrition, founded by Tom Ryder, left

Profile

Tom Ryder is one of a host of do it yourself entrepreneurs to have cashed in on the booming fitness industry (Guy Taylor writes). From Gymshark's Ben Francis to MyProtein's Oliver Cookson, the list of fitness fans making millions selling activewear, sports supplements and protein shakes is ever-growing, buoyed by Generation Z's insatiable appetite for going to the gym.

Ryder's is a classic rags-to-riches story. He grew up on a council estate in Kirkby and is now leading a FTSE 250 company climbing ever closer to a £1 billion valuation. Like many others, his journey began with a simple side hustle: selling sports supplements at the age of 18 from a shop in the town he grew up in. Ryder, an obsessive gymgoer in his teens, spent years balancing his entrepreneurial interests with a day job scaffolding at Liverpool council.

All of that is long in the past now. After switching to the supplement sector full-time, Ryder set up Applied Nutrition in 2014. His first product was a high-calorie weight-gainer, Critical Mass, which targeted gymgoers looking to build muscle. Today, its operations run the gamut from whey protein powder to pre-workout drinks, and health and wellbeing products such as protein-rich breakfast smoothies and vitamin and electrolyte boosters.

There have been several huge milestones over the years, not least the acquisition by JD Sports of a more than 30 per cent stake in 2021. That helped pave the way for the company's float in London three years later, in which it secured a £350 million valuation — alongside a £62 million payday for Ryder.

He has, therefore, already made the eye-watering sums of others in the industry: Francis is estimated to have amassed £800 million, while Cookson sold Myprotein to THG for about £60 million in 2011.

Yet what would truly cement his status is if Applied passes the £1 billion milestone. Few would bet against the Liverpudlian, given its market capitalisation has already more than doubled since the float.

cipitated MFS's failure when it froze the lender's accounts last November. Insolvency practitioners from Alix Partners have alleged in separate court filings that the bank's actions suggested it had "concerns, or strong suspicions, that these accounts were tainted by money-laundering or other criminal activities".

Barclays declined to comment on whether it had been aware of Raja's bankruptcy and related restrictions.

Several different insolvency firms are engaged on MFS work and there are more than 200 companies in the group. Insolvency practitioners working on MFS Ltd are suing Barclays in an attempt to get the bank to release the funds needed to run the insolvency.

Raja has launched legal proceedings against another set of administrators to try to stave off the threat of a second bankruptcy, court records show.

Raja's lawyers have applied to set aside a statutory demand from insolvency practitioners seeking to recover some MFS debts. A statutory demand can be a precursor to a debtor being pursued for bankruptcy. Nimish Patel of Coots & Boots, administrator of the firms concerned, said: "We are considering our position on this."

Peel ramps up pressure on £580m target for takeover

James Hurley

John Whittaker's Peel Group says its takeover target Harworth Group is "becoming increasingly less sustainable" as it published details of its proposed £583 million offer.

Part of the billionaire's group, Peel Pepper, set out the full terms of the cash bid it launched earlier this month for Harworth, a London-listed land and property regeneration company.

Harworth said it remained "unanimous and unequivocal in its rejection of the offer which, in its view, fundamentally undervalues Harworth and its near and longer-term prospects".

Peel, the largest shareholder in Harworth with a nearly 30 per cent stake, said the company would be better served as a private business as its "public listing and business strategy will not generate appropriate risk-adjusted returns for shareholders".

It claimed that Harworth's cash flow profile was "becoming increasingly less sustainable with re-valuation gains increasingly offset by rising administrative expenses and net finance costs".

Peel added that its target's public market listing "limited benefit and the concentrated shareholder register and low liquidity limits exit options for shareholders". Harworth's focus on investing in land that could be used for AI data centres "is still early-stage, highly speculative and unlikely to convert to cash sales or deliver the contribution required to improve the overall returns of the business to an acceptable level within the short to medium term".

Harworth's board will review Peel's offer document and issue a circular to shareholders by September 9, setting out the reasons for its opposition to the proposals. It advised shareholders to take no action in the meantime. Shares in Harworth were flat yesterday at 178p.

Lessons from a tale of two airports

BUSINESS COMMENTARY *Alistair Osborne*

Maybe it's untrue that Gatwick's main job lately is to expose the folly of Heathrow's third runway extravaganza. Yet, you hardly need to be a planespotter to clock the difference in the growth strategies of Britain's two biggest airports.

At Gatwick, chief executive Pierre-Hugues Schmit has one word on repeat: "Affordable." As he puts it: "We want to be an airport for the many, not the few."

A key example of this value for money approach? Gatwick's £2.2 billion second runway project, a relatively cheap and simple affair, largely pushed through by his predecessor Stewart Wingate. It finally got the go-ahead this month after an eight-year planning and legal delay: one all the dafter, too, when it merely turns an existing taxiway into a fully operational landing strip. It will lift capacity to around 80 million travellers a year versus 2025's 42.8 million.

None of this requires a jack-up in passenger charges either, which average out at £15 a pop. For two years, there's been a real-terms cut — 1 per cent below CPI inflation — with no whingeing from Gatwick's owners: Vinci Airports and the BlackRock-owned Global Infrastructure Partners. As Schmit says, if you want airlines to use the new runway capacity "we have to be competitive and affordable".

So, anyway, how about contrasting Heathrow: a third runway showstopper, coming in at a soaraway £49 billion, complete with shifting all 12 lanes of the M25 and demolishing (at least) 752 homes? Sure, it would allow 70 million more passengers. But look at the cost: on airlines' maths, landing charges at what's already the world's priciest airport could double to an uncompetitive £60 per passenger.

Still, aren't they different sorts of airports, you say: the so-called Heathrow hub versus short-haul holiday Gatwick? Well, increasingly not, as government forecasts show. Yes, for now, in a half-year hit by the Iran war, Gatwick's total passengers fell by 4.7 per cent to 19.1 million, with short-haul making up 16.2 million of them — even if operating profits ticked up by 4.7 per cent to £197 million.

Yet, that disguises key trends. Take Gatwick's share of the crucial London-China market. Since 2019, it's up from just 6 per cent to 38 per cent, with the airport now handling four carriers including the big three: China Southern, Air China and China Eastern. China traffic rose 29 per cent in the first half. Gatwick is also home to 11 African airlines. Indeed, it's now handling a total of 62 carriers, up from 53 in a year.

If Gatwick keeps its charges low, won't long-haul traffic increase once the new runway starts operations in about 2030? That's what Schmit expects. And won't that make it a proper alternative to Heathrow?

Department for Transport forecasts suggest that and more. As Gatwick notes in its response to the Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement, "the DfT's new forecasts show 85 per cent of the future growth is in the short-haul and low-cost market" anyway — traffic that could be handled at London and regional airports with far lower costs than Heathrow.

Then, DfT estimates also show that if Heathrow passes on the full costs of its third runway to passengers, its traffic could fall to 77 million passengers by 2038 — below 2025's 84.5 million — with growth displaced to the likes of Gatwick. What's the point, then, of Heathrow's third runway? There's at least one clear message here. Either the airport halves the insane costs of the project or it'll lose out to its far more "affordable" rival.

Food for thought

Proof a new float really can bulk up on the London market. In recent years, investors have got used to a diet of IPOs getting punier by the day — the likes of THG, Dr Martens and Deliveroo. Not Applied Nutrition. It's put on so much financial muscle since October 2024's listing at 140p that the shares have more than doubled to 316½p.

Yes, they slipped 1.5 per cent on the latest update — despite its founder boss, Tom Ryder, going even bigger with the 2026 and 2027 ebitda guidance. It's now up to £43.3 million this year, showing a growth rate of 40 per cent, with £49 million forecast for next. In fact, upgrades have become routine for the Liverpudlian former scaffolder who set it up in 2014 in a Kirkby shop and has turned it into a group with its own manufacturing, valued at £791 million.

Ryder spotted there was more to the fitness, health and wellness market than catering for what he calls "clangers and bangers" beefing up in the gym. So, he's taken a business built on protein shakes into the likes of energy gels, hydration and collagen, now selling mainly through established outlets in 85 countries. He thinks the market is here to stay: "I don't see a world where people give up on health and wellness for cigarettes and alcohol." Indeed, OAPs now use creatine, he says, to boost "cognitive function".

After cashing in £62 million of shares at the float, Ryder still has 34 per cent of a business, backed by Coleen Rooney, with, he reckons, heaps of value to pack on. True, it's early days. But, like his investors so far, he's delighted with the London listing: "We underestimated how much credibility it's given us." He says he was told to "be honest, not be greedy and under-promise and over-deliver". If only other floats had listened to that sort of advice.

A tip for Burnham

Luckily Andy Burnham is "acutely conscious of how hard the operating environment is for businesses, big and small". Or so he told the Financial Times. Still, who's made it so hard? Using his first budget to reverse everything Rachel Reeves did may be too much to ask. But he could at least undo the payroll taxes hurting the young.

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Business

US inflation stays stable as Fed expected to hold rates

Mehreen Khan Economics Editor

A key measure of US inflation was stable at 3.3 per cent in July, in line with forecasts and helping the US Federal Reserve's "wait-and-see" approach to raising interest rates.

Official data showed that the Fed's preferred measure of prices, the core personal consumption expenditures (PCE) index, was unchanged at 3.3 per cent over the year, and rose by 0.2 per cent between June and July. The figures were in line with estimates from Wall Street. The non-core measure of PCE, which includes food and energy costs, was also unchanged at 3.7 per cent over the year, above the 3.6 per cent forecast from economists.

The Fed targets an annual core PCE rate of 2 per cent and has not met the threshold for a sustained period since 2021. Investors expect the Fed to keep its benchmark borrowing costs unchanged at 3.5 to 3.75 per cent next month, with bets on a tightening at 33 per cent.

The inflation figure comes before an address from Kevin Warsh, the Fed chairman, who will make his first speech since spooking investors with a regime change at the Fed. Warsh, who took the job in May, has promised not to "spoon feed" markets with clues about the central bank's next move. This has been interpreted as an unwillingness to raise interest rates despite above-target inflation.

"Warsh has been reluctant to clearly articulate the rationale behind the Fed's hold in the last meeting," Christophe Boucher, chief investment officer at ABN Amro said.

Warsh will speak on Friday afternoon at the Fed's annual Jackson Hole conference of central bankers and economists. "The first Jackson Hole symposium for past Fed chairs has served to outline the Fed's doctrine and structural factors but markets are likely to treat this as a Fed press conference instead, given the lack of clear signals," Boucher said.

US government bond prices fell on Wednesday, raising borrowing costs for the government and households. The yield on two-year Treasury bonds gained 0.03 percentage points to 4.21 per cent, and 0.02 percentage points on ten-year benchmark bonds which are at 4.65 per cent. The dollar strengthened 0.11 per cent against a basket of major currencies and was flat against the pound at $1.36. Oil prices for Brent crude, the global benchmark, fell for the third consecutive day to to $86.84 — a two-week low.

Investors have dumped US bonds this month over worries about the path of inflation, Warsh's resolve and the rising government debt pile and deficit under the Trump administration. Inflation in the world's largest economy has risen since the US-Iran war, when annual price growth was expanding at a rate of 3 per cent.

"The Fed still has considerable ground to cover before markets see 2 per cent inflation as a credible outcome rather than a distant aspiration," Olu Sonola, head of US economics research at Fitch Ratings, said.

Inflation has been driven higher by the rise in global oil prices and the massive investment in AI chips and related commodities. In July, recreational goods and vehicles recorded the largest monthly rise in prices, at 1.1 per cent, according to the US Bureau of Economic Analysis.

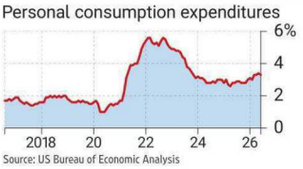
Durable goods inflation rose 0.4 per cent on the month and by 0.3 per cent across the services sector. Gasoline and energy prices recorded deflation of 2.7 per cent between June and July.

July's figures included 0.11 percentage points of inflation caused by a rise in "portfolio management" fees. This "likely will be almost entirely revised away following forthcoming methodological changes", said Oliver Allen, senior US economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, a consultancy. "Meanwhile, we see no signs that cost pressures linked to the energy shock are translating to a pick-up in underlying services inflation."

Chris Conrad of the Republic Boot Company in Houston, Texas. Durable goods inflation was up 0.4 per cent on the month

US inflation

Personal consumption expenditures



Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis

Homebuyers on the up despite rising mortgage bills

Charlotte Bend

Homebuyers have returned to the market following a slow summer but face an extra £18,200 bill to offset an increase in mortgage rates, according to Zoopla.

The number of people searching for homes is up 7 per cent year-on-year, with more people searching to buy in every region of the UK for the first time in a year, according to the online property portal's latest house price index to the end of July, released today.

Searching activity was found to be strongest in the southeast, up almost 9 per cent, while the northwest saw the lowest increase, with just 0.7 per cent.

Mortgage rates peaked close to 5 per cent in April, causing many home buyers to wait on the sidelines over the summer months, according to Zoopla. The stability in rates, which remain closer to 5 per cent than 4 per cent, means people have begun to search for homes again. However, sales agreed are still down 6 per cent versus last year.

Richard Donnell, executive director at Zoopla, said: "The low point for activity was mid-July around the time of the World Cup final. Since then we have seen a steady increase in the number of people searching for a home, assessing their options ahead of the post-holiday rebound in sales market activity.

"Average mortgage rates have stabilised, meaning affordability remains an important factor for many homebuyers choosing their next home."

Buying power, otherwise known as how much someone can borrow for a mortgage payment, is 9 per cent lower since January. This means that a buyer who could previously afford a £200,000 mortgage while keeping their monthly repayment unchanged can now borrow only about £182,000 for the same monthly payment. The impact of higher mortgage rates will hit first-time buyers harder than existing homeowners as they typically require longer mortgage terms and larger loans.

The additional value to a deposit on a home purchase to keep monthly mortgage repayments unchanged compared with the start of the year varied between regions, with those in London needing to add almost double the national average to their deposit (£35,000), while those in the northeast would need an additional £10,200.

Average annual prices were up 0.9 per cent to £272,800. Zoopla's house price index measures the change in prices where sales are agreed, not an asking price, and is based on the largest underlying data sample of any UK house price index.

Business confidence given a boost from the Burnham bounce

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

Andy Burnham replacing Sir Keir Starmer as prime minister led to a bump in business confidence over the last quarter as companies prepared to unleash more investment and welcomed plans for further regional devolution.

An index of sentiment among business leaders published by Barclays today rose to 63 per cent in the second quarter of the year, up from 57 per cent in the previous three months.

Not only did businesses grow more confident in the wider UK economy, but they also became more optimistic about their own financial fortunes in the year ahead after the change of government, according to the bank's index.

Some 60 per cent of the 1,000 business leaders polled told Barclays they thought more devolution would improve economic opportunities, and just over a third thought that No 10 North would benefit their business.

Investment intentions also rose over the past three months, potentially down to a reduction in political uncertainty after Burnham faced no challengers to become the new Labour leader.

Barclays said that 56 per cent of surveyed businesses planned to lift capital spending in the coming year, mainly focused on training and developing staff, research and development and upgrading equipment for employees.

Andy Burnham's No 10 North is welcomed among business leaders

Matt Hammerstein, chief executive of Barclays UK corporate bank, said: "The UK's growth prospects depend on businesses having the confidence to invest. It is encouraging to see firms preparing to commit capital again, particularly in skills, research and development, equipment and digital capability, which are critical to improving productivity."

Several other confidence surveys indicated that the UK economy has benefited from a "Burnham bounce". GfK's consumer confidence index climbed to a two-year high in August having also risen at the fastest pace since 2023 in the previous month, when Burnham became prime minister.

Britain's gross domestic product also grew at the fastest pace in the G7 countries in the first half of the year under Sir Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves, who was replaced as chancellor by the former defence secretary John Healey.

Healey will give his first budget on October 28 amid speculation that the war in the Middle East and higher government bond yields have more than halved the UK's fiscal headroom, tax rises or spending cuts more likely.

Earlier this week Burnham said that the government would not be "unrealistic" about the "challenging" state of the public finances as he refused to rule out tax increases in two months' time.

Ryan Bourne

Britain should ignore America's personalised pricing panic

Suppose Tesco emailed you a £2-off deal for a coffee brand, a month after you stopped buying it. Would this worry you? Most shoppers, I suspect, would pocket the voucher happily without a second thought.

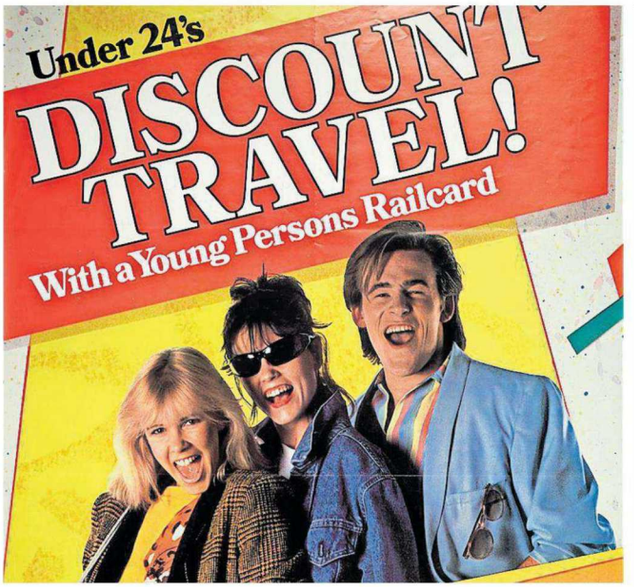
Describe that offer as "an algorithm using your purchase history to estimate your willingness to pay", though, and some might get more nervous. Explain it instead as your friends paying more for coffee because of "surveillance pricing" and many politicians would get a bee in their bonnet.

Algorithmic "personalised pricing" is producing something of a moral panic in the US. Last week the Federal Trade Commission proposed warning businesses that undisclosed use of personal data to set prices may fall under deceptive practices. Andrew Ferguson, its chairman, said shoppers expect listed prices to be the same for all, not attuned to retailers' estimates of what each will pay.

Really? Here in Britain, retailers, train operators, budget airlines, pub groups and ride-hailing apps discriminate using price between customers every day, just as companies do in the States. Think railcards for the young and the old, advance fares that punish last-minute bookers, Clubcard and Nectar offers tailored to shopping history and loyalty penalties in telecoms.

Flight prices, in particular, vary according to when you buy and how long your trip is, as companies predict whether you're a leisure or business traveller, the latter being less price sensitive. Algorithms and AI didn't invent price discrimination, in other words. Better data has just enabled more sophisticated, precise and cheaper profiling of individual customers in more industries.

It's this shift from categories of people to individuals fueling distaste. New York already requires the magnificently ominous warning: "THIS PRICE WAS SET BY AN ALGORITHM USING YOUR PERSONAL DATA." Its legislature recently voted to ban surveillance pricing, while preserving specified discounts. Maryland has enacted a law barring large grocers and delivery services from using personalised data to raise food prices.



The Young Persons Railcard, an example of price discrimination, dates to 1982

Britain has so far been refreshingly reluctant to leap to regulation, although there have been tremors in parliament. In 2016, Lord Whitty called it a "very dark art". In 2018 Greg Clark, then business secretary, commissioned research into the prevalence and consumer effects of personalised pricing, warning companies against abusing customer data. A Competition and Markets Authority study that year found little evidence of overt personalised prices.

Its 2021 assessment highlighted the risks posed by opaque pricing, weak competition and the exploitation of inert customers, but admitted that personalised pricing could benefit customers too. The Bank of England says it is now widely adopted across all sectors, in the form of online accounts and loyalty cards.

So far then, we've been admirably in line with economic analysis. The popular perception is to see personalised pricing as akin to a monopolist charging everyone the maximum they are willing to pay, so hoovering up consumer surplus to boost company profits. But as Jidong Zhou, an economist at Yale, explains, that scenario assumes that there's no meaningful competition and companies can perfectly price discriminate. If either assumption buckles, the economic impact of moving from uniform to personalised pricing becomes messier.

Where serving an extra customer costs little for a software platform, gym or online newspaper, personalised prices spread fixed costs across more customers, with discounts widening access. In a world where many firms have access to personalised data, Zhou's published paper with Andrew Rhodes shows that companies would try to poach others' customers, resulting in competitive personalised discounting. Information telling one business you are loyal — and ripe for exploitation — alerts another to the discounts needed to win you over.

Personalised pricing, then, is not inherently "good" or "bad." Its precise impact in any context depends on an industry's cost structure and competitive dynamics. As an example of this messy reality, Jean-Pierre Dubé and Sanjog Misra used randomised pricing experiments at ZipRecruiter and found that personalisation would raise profits by another 19 per cent over a uniform price and reduce total customer surplus. Yet over 60 per cent of customers would benefit. In many sectors, these price-sensitive customers may well be poorer.

What would a personalised price prohibition mean in practice? Not just a ban on companies squeezing you for more. Applied consistently, it also means no discount to someone with a product in their basket which they passed on, no electronic haggling and fewer ways for new companies to muscle in by undercutting big incumbent players on price.

And, if applied in the more populist way of banning personalised prices from being higher, businesses would often look to achieve the same economic outcome within the law. That might mean raising basic prices and offering more targeted discounts to price-sensitive customers. This would get them to the same place, albeit marketed very differently.

As this sort of pricing proliferates, will British equanimity survive the example of America's panic? It's easy to foresee how "personalised discount helps challenger poach customers" could be drowned out by future tales of firms using "AI to charge grieving families more for flowers" here.

It's also easy to imagine a Labour government promising to lower living costs trying to prove its vigilance on this misunderstood issue. Just last year, then the competition minister Justin Madders acknowledged the Commons business and trade select committee's "sense that something is not always right" with personalised pricing, before adding: "I am not sure we have the evidence at the moment to support that assertion."

Ministers should dwell on that distinction. A pricing practice feeling icky warrants investigation, not an assumption of consumer harm. Sometimes a company that knows more about you extracts more. Sometimes it offers a price to entice. And if this all raises profits? That's precisely the signal for competitors to enter and compete.

Ryan Bourne is an economist at the Cato Institute and editor of the book The War on Prices

Department store chain misses Wall St forecasts

Louisa Clarence-Smith
US Business Editor

America's largest department store chain missed Wall Street's second-quarter sales expectations after muted spending on women's clothing and skincare products.

Kohl's reported quarterly revenue of $3.32 billion, compared with analysts' average estimate of $3.35 billion. Its comparable sales fell 0.9 per cent after dropping 4.2 per cent a year ago, as higher sales in departments including home goods and children's clothing helped to offset some of the declines in women's clothing and skincare.

Second-quarter profit slipped 1.3 per cent year-on-year to $151 million.

Michael Bender, chief executive, said "we know there is more work to be done" to attract cautious shoppers. "We are operating in a challenging macro-economic environment where our customers are experiencing persistent financial pressures from inflation in everyday expenses like gas and food," he said in a post-earnings call. "We're bringing value everywhere we can."

Kohl's was founded in Wisconsin in 1962 by Maxwell Kohl, a Polish immigration who first established a supermarket chain that was later adapted into a department store format. It has more than 1,100 stores across 49 states, as well as an online store and app.

Average transaction values declined slightly in the second quarter as low and middle-income shoppers sought bargains, the company said.

US consumer sentiment deteriorated in August and retail sales fell for the first time in nine months in July, underscoring an increasingly "selective" shopping trend among middle and lower-income households.

The company said it planned to stick with its strategy of bringing seasonal inventory to shelves earlier than usual.

The company expected growth in annual net sales to be in the range of flat to a decline of 1.5 per cent, compared with its previous range of flat or a 2 per cent fall. Kohl's lifted its full-year profit forecast after gains from $150 million tariff refunds received in the second quarter. It expects fiscal-year 2026 adjusted earnings of $1.80 to $2.40 a share, above its earlier forecast of $1 to $1.60 a share. Kohl's also said it plans to re-start about $100 million in share buybacks this year.

Kohl's shares were up $0.12, or 0.6 per cent, at $17.80 in afternoon trading in New York.

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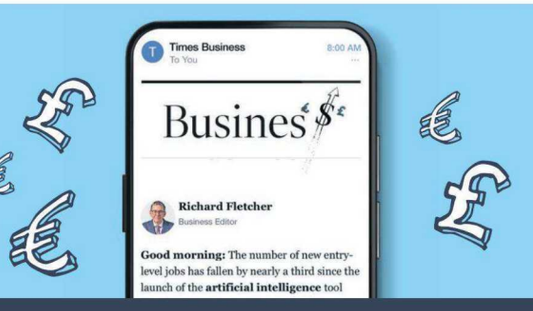

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Falling exports hit UK car factories

ZHE JI/GETTY IMAGES

A Bentley Continental GT is exhibited at a motor show in Shanghai; exports of British vehicles to China are down almost 37 per cent since last year

British car factories have reported a fall in exports leading to fewer vehicles being produced, just at a time when the industry is grappling with the transition to electric vehicles and high energy costs (Robert Lea writes).

Car production fell by 10.6 per cent to 61,700 in July, leaving output in the year to date down nearly 5 per cent to 433,500, according to the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, the trade body.

Exports fell by nearly 16 per cent to 47,377 vehicles. This affected all major markets including the EU, down 15.2 per cent; the United States, 17.7 per cent lower; Turkey, down 18.5 per cent; China, at 36.9 per cent lower; and Japan, down 24.4 per cent.

Production of fully electric and hybrid models recorded the first monthly increase of the year, up 6.8 per cent to 25,678 units. Electrified models accounted for more than four in ten cars built in July, up from about three in ten a year ago.

The picture was worse in the van market. With the year-on-year comparison hobbled by the decision of the European automotive group Stellantis to close the Vauxhall Vivaro factory in Luton in March 2025, light commercial vehicle production dropped by more than a third to just 1,800. That took output in the first seven months of the year to 16,100, less than half the number produced a year earlier.

Car output remains at less than half what it was before the pandemic and not much more than a third of where it was at the most recent high-water mark in 2016 before foreign inward investment stalled following the Brexit vote.

The trade body said July had been particularly weak because of early factory shutdowns for holidays and maintenance work, and the ever shifting landscape of churning production models.

Mike Hawes, the chief executive of the SMMT, said Britain's car factories were "under intense pressure" — and the high cost of doing business and uncertainty about EVs were not the only issues. "The negative performance is being compounded by weaker overseas demand and fierce global competition," he said.

Most car producers in the UK are in crisis. Jaguar Land Rover, Britain's largest automotive employer, has not built a Jaguar in a year because of its delayed transition of the marque into an all-electric brand, a decision not helped by an apparent lack of demand.

Nissan's transition to electrification at Britain's largest car plant, in Sunderland, is going so poorly that it has invited the Chinese carmaker Chery to use redundant spare capacity in the factory. Toyota is running at a fraction of its capacity at Burnaston near Derby. Bentley at Crewe has admitted misreading demand. Aston Martin, with factories in Warwickshire and south Wales, has been chronically lossmaking.

VW bosses and unions prepare for battle

Simon Freeman

Volkswagen's bosses and labour leaders dug in before a critical board meeting next week, as its chief executive pushed for deeper cost cuts and unions rejected layoffs and plant closures in the German group's biggest-ever restructuring.

Europe's largest carmaker is considering measures that could double the planned number of job cuts to up to 100,000, close factories and carve out parts of the business as it seeks to revive profits and fend off growing competition from Chinese rivals.

Oliver Blume, the chief executive, visited VW's electric vehicle plants in Emden and Zwickau yesterday — both considered vulnerable under the restructuring plan — where he praised employees' efforts to cut costs but warned that more would be needed.

"This journey is not over. Because we not only measure ourselves against our own past performance, we measure ourselves against the best locations in Europe," Blume told staff at both sites.

"Labour costs today are more than double those of comparable European locations. And when it comes to factory costs, other plants are still significantly cheaper. This is not a criticism, it is the reality against which we must measure ourselves," he said.

The plans will be discussed at a supervisory board meeting on September 4. Labour representatives and the state of Lower Saxony, which have traditionally opposed major job losses, hold a majority on the board.

Emden is in Volkswagen's home state of Lower Saxony, which faces state elections next year. Zwickau, which Blume said had set a particularly strong example with lower costs, is in the eastern state of Saxony.

Both factories, along with Volkswagen's campervan plant in Hanover and VW's Audi plant in Neckarsulm, currently lack a business plan beyond 2030. Osnabrück, about 100 miles south of Emden, is also under threat, with vehicle production there due to end as early as next year.

Workers had already agreed to about 50,000 job cuts, mainly through voluntary redundancy schemes. But management now thinks a further 50,000 roles will have to be lost from its 630,000 global workforce.

Blume launched his tour after complaints over how the restructuring has been communicated, which representatives have described as "disastrous".

He has said that VW was in a "more than critical state" and that the measures adopted so far were not enough to restore competitiveness. He has outlined plans to cut its model line-up by half and reduce its global production target, which peaked at about 11 million vehicles in 2018, to 9 million.

Daniela Cavallo, head of Volkswagen's powerful works council, said that layoffs and site closures would not solve problems caused by tariffs, Chinese competition and weak European demand. "A vision for the future must consist of many different elements. It cannot be solely about sites, labour costs and staff cuts," she said.

Blume has described plant closures as a last resort. Osnabrück could yet be saved through a partnership with the defence industry, although discussions have so far failed to produce a deal. In Emden and Zwickau, Blume said that VW's commitment to the sites would not end even if future vehicle production could not be secured.

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ExxonMobil fined for leaks that risked a 'catastrophic event'

Greig Cameron Scottish Business Editor

A major US energy group has been fined £267,000 following repeated leaks of flammable hydrocarbons that could have led to a "catastrophic event" at its former ethylene plant in Scotland.

The Health & Safety Executive found evidence of five leaks during its investigation into ExxonMobil's operation. It said the company's inspection system was "woefully inadequate" and that some issues persisted for up to four months before being resolved.

A routine HSE inspection in May 2019 uncovered a problem with pipework emitting ethane gas and dimethyl sulphide, a highly flammable liquid. Further inquiries found the same pipe had leaked in February 2018, while a separate one elsewhere on the site in Mossmorran, Fife, had issues in December of that year. Continued investigations identified two further leaks, in June and September 2019.

The HSE said each incident was caused by corrosion under insulation, which is when water gets beneath insulating material used to stop freezing and begins to corrode the pipes. Production at the plant was ended in February this year when ExxonMobil said it was no longer economically viable.

Lindsey Stein, from the HSE, said: "At a site run by one of the biggest energy companies in the world, subject to the strictest controls and processing high volumes of hazardous material, what our inspectors found beggars belief.

"The failure of ExxonMobil to properly inspect insulated pipework led to five separate leaks of highly flammable hydrocarbons, and while none of these leaks resulted in a catastrophic event, this was down to good fortune rather than good management. The arrangements in place to detect and prevent corrosion were woefully inadequate, and the consequences could have been far more serious.

"Systematic risk management isn't just best practice, it's a legal duty, precisely because these are high-hazard operations where the margin for error is minimal. In its simplest terms, process safety is about keeping hazardous substances where they belong: inside the pipes, not in the atmosphere.

"Once we stepped in, the operator was able to identify and fix problems quickly and effectively. That tells you everything you need to know: the measures needed to prevent these leaks were reasonably practicable all along."

ExxonMobil Chemical Ltd said it had accepted responsibility and added: "We co-operated fully with the HSE throughout its investigation, including complying with all notices served, and commissioned an independent assessment. We accept full responsibility for the failures identified and have since made significant changes to how we inspect and manage corrosion risk across our operations."

Cost of drug deal with US kept secret by ministers

Alex Ralph
Chief Business Correspondent

Ministers are refusing to publish the impact assessment setting out the estimated cost of the US-UK pharmaceuticals trade deal following calls from backbench MPs and a request under freedom of information laws.

The government agreed to double spending on innovative medicines over the next ten years in exchange for a three-year tariff exemption on pharma exports to the US as part of a deal with the Trump administration in April.

The agreement has been welcomed by multinational drug companies operating in Britain, which have long lobbied the government for an increase to improve the commercial environment.

However, some cross-party backbench MPs are now pressing the government to disclose the forecast costs to the NHS of the deal.

Meanwhile, a group of campaigners, including Global Justice Now, have been pursuing legal action against the government over concerns that the changes will end the independence of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (Nice).

Nice and the Department of Health & Social Care have conducted an impact assessment of the deal, but the department has declined to release it in response to a freedom of information request from The Times.

"DHSC believes release of this information would prejudice the interests of the UK in relation to trade with the US and other international partners," it said. "Although the headline UK-US pharmaceuticals arrangement has been published, the withheld assessment goes beyond the published text and includes internal analysis of risks, costs and sensitivities attached to implementation."

It added: "Accurate and frank discussion of the possible impact is essential to conduct the most effective policy development and delivery, and this would be prevented if the requested assessments were released.

"We also take into account the fact that this information is commercially sensitive. The withheld material contains assumptions and analysis relevant to medicines pricing, market behaviour, investment incentives, NHS uptake, future medicines spending and possible future commercial arrangements with the pharmaceutical sector."

Layla Moran, the Liberal Democrat chairwoman of the Commons health select committee, led a parliamentary debate in late June where she called for the impact assessment to be published.

She told MPs: "When we should be seeing money delivered to the front line, instead we are seeing money diverted to a small number of very large US-based pharmaceutical companies with no transparency, little debate and absolutely no vote in this House."

Under April's agreement, the government committed to double spending on innovative medicines as a proportion of GDP, from 0.3 per cent to 0.6 per cent over the next ten years.

The range of Nice's so-called quality-adjusted life year, which measures the cost of a treatment for every healthy year it delivers for a patient, is to be increased for the first time since 1999, from between £20,000 to £30,000 a year to £25,000 to £35,000. It is used by Nice when deciding whether to recommend a new drug on the NHS.

In a letter last month from James Murray, the then health secretary, he confirmed to Moran: "Over the short term, our projections are more definite as the likely pipeline of innovative medicines is more visible. While there is still uncertainty, we estimated at the time of finalisation the arrangement would cost approximately £1 billion in England over the current spending review period."

Layla Moran called for the figures to be published

YAZMIN OUKHELLOU/INSTAGRAM

Most young investors trust AI to guide them

Young investors trust advice given by artificial intelligence over television, radio or celebrities, research shows (Charlotte Bend writes). Four in five less experienced investors have opted to use AI for help and about two thirds reported doing so occasionally or regularly.

The survey of people who own or would consider buying investments in the next year was conducted by the Financial Conduct Authority. More than half of those questioned said they would trust AI tools, despite almost three quarters knowing that they can provide inaccurate information.

Less than a third of respondents said they would trust influencers and less then half trusted TV and radio presenters.

Two thirds of young investors use AI for financial decisions — more than trust influencers such as Yasmin Oukhellou or radio and TV presenter Felicity Hannah, left

The FCA research also found many investors misunderstood the level of protection they had when relying on AI to support decisions. Almost half mistakenly believed AI-generated financial information was regulated; more than a third thought a decision about money based solely on AI advice was fine.

About a third wrongly thought they would be entitled to reparation from the Financial Services Compensation Scheme or the Financial Ombudsman Service if AI advice were to be wrong. However, these protections are limited to those who have received advice that causes harm through an authorised financial adviser.

General-purpose AI chatbots are not regulated, although some tools specifically set up to provide financial advice could be likely to fall within the FCA's remit. For instance, if a firm regulated by the FCA were to launch its own AI tool to provide regulated financial advice, then those using it may be eligible for protection.

Lucy Castledine, director of consumer investments at the FCA, said: "AI can help you research companies, understand jargon or explore options before you make a decision. But you need to understand how you're protected and continue to use your own judgment."

The FCA's InvestSmart website helps investors make informed decisions with explanations of different schemes, "rules" for smart investors, and analysis of crypto and high-risk investments. The City regulator also offers a tool to help investors understand whether they are informed or likely to act rationally so they can better understand their decision-making.

The FCA advised those thinking of investing to make the final decision themselves, verify the information that AI offers and remember that AI can also provide incorrect information, otherwise known as hallucinations.

Business

Can a 'tired' Altman keep OpenAI ahead of its rivals?

THE TIMES
TITANS OF AI PART 2: SAM ALTMAN

The entrepreneur, 41, is emerging from a tough period as rivals beat his firm to go public, writes **Louisa Clarence-Smith**

Sam Altman broke a Silicon Valley taboo recently by admitting he is tired. In a breach of the unwritten rule that tech founders must project an aura of high energy and striving optimism in public at all times, he said: "I've been doing this a long time. It's tiring."

He added: "This is the coolest job in the world. I plan to do this for the rest of my career. But it's like, much harder than I have a way to explain to people," the OpenAI chief executive told the *Invest like the Best* podcast.

Altman, 41, is emerging from a tough chapter for the company that awakened the world to revolutionary advances in artificial intelligence when it released ChatGPT in November 2022.

ChatGPT's viral launch catapulted Altman to global fame and he was courted by politicians around the world. More than 1 billion people are active monthly users of the app.

However, he now finds himself in the galling position of having to watch Anthropic, a rival AI lab set up by former colleagues who defected from OpenAI in 2020, beat him to a public debut anticipated for this autumn. Anthropic is reported to be targeting a valuation of about $2 trillion, which would be in the same ballpark as Elon Musk's record-breaking IPO of SpaceX in June.

The rival surpassed OpenAI's revenues in the most recent quarter after focusing on enterprise and coding. Excitement around Anthropic has been building as its Claude models improve and are adopted by businesses.

Anthropic's success led OpenAI executives to realise they had become too distracted by "side quests". Last year the company announced Sora, a video generator, and Atlas, a web browser. Both have since been scrapped.

At an all-hands meeting in March, Fidji Simo, then OpenAI's head of applications, urged staff to focus on enterprise and coding productivity. "We cannot miss this moment," she said.

The strategy pivot was followed by a distracting legal battle with co-founder Elon Musk, during which damaging accusations about Altman and his alleged untrustworthiness emerged.

The firm has suffered from a series of recent high-profile departures, including Simo, who has stepped back for health reasons, as well as former operating chief Brad Lightcap and chief revenue officer Denise Dresser. All this occurred as Altman became a target of personal threats as public sentiment around AI in America declines, owing to fears of job losses and concerns about the construction of data centres.

Sam Altman has been personally

In April, a man allegedly threw a Molotov cocktail at Altman's home in San Francisco, before making his way to OpenAI's headquarters where he threatened to burn down the building. Nobody was hurt. Altman responded

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Hochschild glitters as gold and silver prices shoot up

Jon Rees

Profits more than tripled at Hochschild Mining in the first half of the year as it benefited from the rising price of gold and silver.

The precious metals miner, which operates in South America, said pre-tax profit for the six months to June reached $365.8 million from $109.3 million the year before, despite producing smaller quantities of gold and silver.

Production in that period was 151,830 gold equivalent ounces and 11.7 million silver equivalent ounces compared with 165,176 and 12.7 million respectively a year earlier. Shares in Hochschild closed up 33½p, or 5.4 per cent, at 659p.

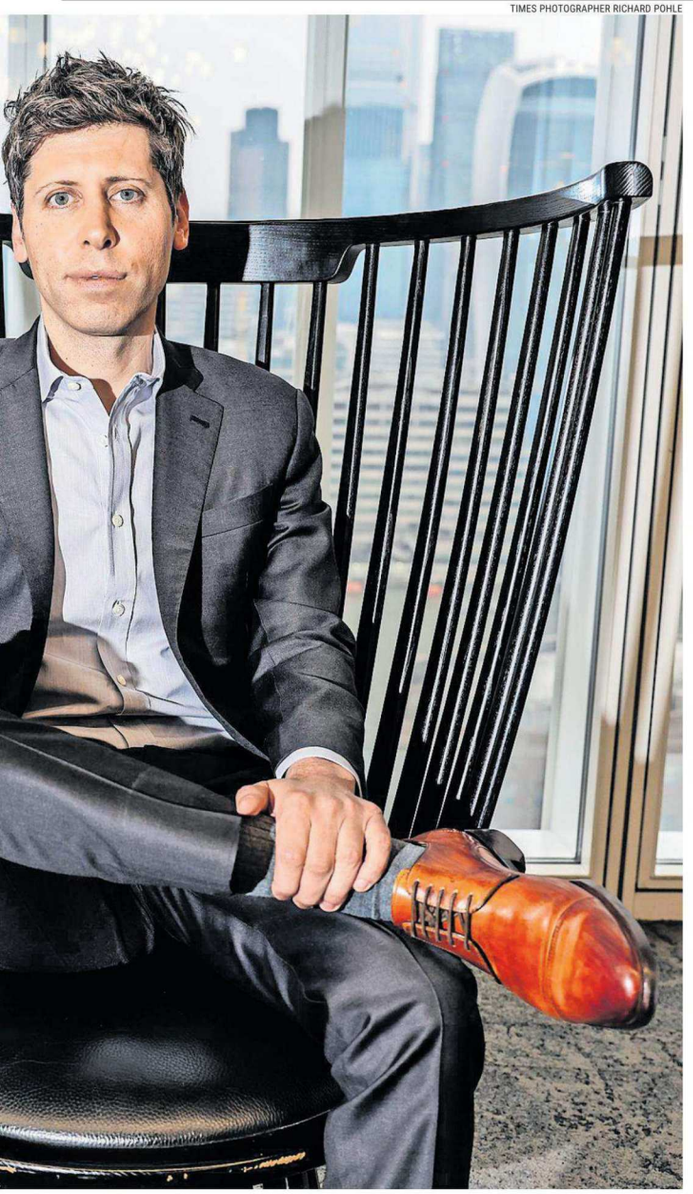
The chief executive, Eduardo Landin, said the results reflected the significantly increased commodity pricing, with average realised gold and silver prices up 47 per cent and 130 per cent respectively in the half, though this was offset by scheduled reduced production. Revenue rose during the period by 62 per cent to $844.4 million.

The company revised cost guidance for the full year up to $2,380 to $2,500 per gold equivalent ounces from its previous guidance of $2,157 to $2,329.

Hochschild operates two underground mines at Inmaculada, Peru, and San Jose in Argentina along with Mara Rosa, an open pit gold mine in Goias, Brazil.

Landin said: "While costs for the year are now expected to be above our original guidance, this primarily reflects the impact of higher precious metal prices, which are being seen across the industry and have significantly increased export taxes in Argentina, workers' profit-sharing, royalties and other production-linked costs, as well as stronger than expected local currencies across all three of the company's operating jurisdictions."

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE



threatened and has seen Elon Musk's SpaceX beat OpenAI to a Nasdaq listing

by sharing a photo of his husband and toddler in a bid to humanise himself and deter future violence.

The man who wants us to trust him to lead us to superintelligence — a theoretical milestone where machines could surpass human intelligence — hails from suburban St Louis, Missouri. The firstborn of the late Jerry Altman, a real estate broker and housing activist and Connie Gibstine, a dermatologist, attended a progressive synagogue and high school, where he developed a fascination with computers.

He says he has been interested in artificial intelligence his whole life, or at least since he was a "very nerdy kid" spending Friday nights on his computer or watching and reading science fiction.

One of his most vivid childhood memories is of staying up late, playing with the Macintosh LC II he had received for his eighth birthday and thinking "someday, the computer was going to learn to think", he previously told the Wall Street Journal.

He later made it to Stanford University, where he met the co-founders for his first start-up, Loopt, a location-based social network for the era of flip-phones. Through Loopt, Altman was introduced to Paul Graham, founder of Y Combinator, the start-up accelerator, who named Altman as his successor two years after Loopt was sold in 2012.

Under Altman's leadership, Y Combinator expanded to incubate hundreds of start-ups a year, while backing "moonshots" — high-risk bets on technological advances. It also launched a research non-profit that planted the seed of OpenAI.

Altman has described his most influential mentors as Graham and Peter Thiel, the powerful venture capitalist, who he still goes to for advice on the most challenging problems because of their "non-linear thinking". Thiel, one of Altman's earliest backers, is also credited with helping the entrepreneur meet his future husband, Oliver Mulherin, then a software engineer student; their first encounter was in a hot tub at 3am at Thiel's home, according to *The Optimist*, an account of Altman's rise by Keach Hagey.

HOW TO CATCH ANTHROPIC?

Altman now believes the most important thing OpenAI can do is to "create smart models and run them efficiently and abundantly for a lot of people".

He told the *David Senra* podcast: "If we can get that right, I believe that everything else will follow." Most of his efforts are now focused on "models and compute [computing power]".

The arch networker and talented fundraiser has been drumming up partnerships to finance the infrastructure required to power energy-hungry large language models. OpenAI also entered the hardware market this summer with Codex Micro, a keyboard that lets engineers interact with the company's AI agent programming platform.

It is also expected to launch a "doughnut-shaped" smart speaker in time for Christmas that will be a "physical manifestation" of ChatGPT, according to Bloomberg. OpenAI has not confirmed those plans.

OpenAI's revenue is presently driven by business and developer access via its Application Programming Interface (API) and consumer subscription tiers for ChatGPT.

Harrison Rolfes, a research analyst at Pitchbook, said he believes advertising will eventually be OpenAI's "golden egg". He said: "They're just still figuring it out. But the thing with ad businesses is they will exponentially grow year over year." The idea is that OpenAI will leverage its user base of more than 1 billion a month by throwing ads in front of it. Or, if a user asks ChatGPT a query, the response could be partially determined by paying advertisers. "Then they'll start competing with Google as opposed to Anthropic," Rolfes said.

Willy Lee, principal at Neostellar Capital, said: "I think there's a lot of criticism in the last 12 months because

OpenAI, I think, was trying to digest a lot of different things that are happening in the ecosystem, but I think it's hard not to argue that he was very fundamental to this technology and the ability to raise capital for this type of technology. And then I think he's also demonstrated the ability to drive a successful product for the business."

CAN WE TRUST HIM?

Questions about Altman's trustworthiness have plagued the entrepreneur. Ilya Sutskever, OpenAI's former chief scientist, testified in a legal battle between Altman and Musk this year that he spent about a year gathering evidence for the ChatGPT maker's board that Altman had displayed a "consistent pattern of lying" before the chief executive was briefly ousted in 2023. He was reinstated after a backlash from investors and employees.

Musk, who co-founded OpenAI but left in 2018, has branded him "Scam Altman" over his accusation that Altman betrayed OpenAI's original non-profit mission by turning it into a closed, for-profit commercial giant.

In May, a federal jury threw out Musk's lawsuit, which claimed that Altman unlawfully enriched himself from the organisation. "He doesn't lack intelligence or ambition, but his authority and decision-making aren't really as transparent as people probably want from him, which gives him kind of that rep," Rolfes said regarding accusations of untrustworthiness.

OpenAI was founded in 2015 as a research-focused nonprofit with the mission of advancing AI for the benefit of humanity. Four years later, it created a for-profit subsidiary to attract investment capital to fund its research. Last year, it completed the restructuring of its for-profit business ahead of a planned IPO so that investors can more easily reap returns. However, it remained unclear how much influence the nonprofit would have over the for-profit business, according to some analysts. OpenAI states that the nonprofit is now the OpenAI Foundation, which continues to control the for-profit entity, which is a public benefit corporation.

Unusually, Altman does not hold any equity in OpenAI, and was paid just $66,000 in 2024, the last data available. However, he is believed to have an extensive personal investment portfolio, including in companies with which OpenAI does business. His total net worth is estimated to be $3.3 billion, according to Forbes.

Rolfes said: "How he organised the corporate structure of OpenAI is still unsettled and it makes you think, who has control? And you come to realise that the nonprofit still has this control aspect over it and that he's not really receiving any sort of stuff like salary or benefit from it. And it always makes you think in the back of your mind, what is the play with that? Like, why is he structuring it this way? Again, that goes back to the whole trust aspect."

Could Altman step back from the chief executive position before an IPO? If he moved to another executive position, Greg Brockman, another OpenAI co-founder who presently serves as president, has increasingly taken responsibility for the day-to-day running of the business and regularly conducts media interviews, could be a contender for the chief executive role. A source familiar with the company said there was no plan for Altman to step back.

Altman has said he is not motivated by money, given the fortune he made investing earlier in his career. "I have a front row seat to the most exciting moment in history," he said in an interview last month. "That is worth more to me than any amount of money."

TOMORROW

Demis Hassabis of DeepMind

Buyouts help Brave Bison double profits

Emma Powell
Media and Telecoms Editor

The marketing company backed by Lord Ashcroft has more than doubled its profits as it continues its pursuit of a London-listed rival.

Brave Bison, listed on London's junior Aim exchange, said it was lifted by a series of acquisitions, a strong performance from its marketing training business and winning new contracts during the first half of the year.

Net revenue rose by 98 per cent to £23.9 million and adjusted pre-tax profit was 120 per cent higher at £4.1 million. Statutory pre-tax profit rose to £2.1 million, from £100,000. The company has won deals this year with brands including Nestlé, Heineken and McLaren.

The shares, which have risen by 27 per cent this year, closed up 4½p, or 5.6 per cent, at 84½p.

The company is continuing its attempts to win the support of shareholders in System1 for its takeover offer.

Brave Bison, led by Oliver Green, left, and brother Theo, made £4.1 million

System1 provides marketing testing services to brands including Pfizer, Ikea and Amazon, and generates about a third of its sales in America. Brave Bison is already the largest shareholder in System1 after a share swap with John Kearon, the company's founder, in March gave it a 28 per cent stake.

The company, also on Aim, has rejected the £43 million offer, which it said did not represent "an acceptable fair value for all shareholders".

Oliver Green, Brave Bison's executive chairman, said the board believed a takeover was in the "best interests" of its shareholders and those of System1.

Brave Bison, whose clients include TikTok and Amazon Prime Video, has been heavily acquisitive since Oliver Green and Theo Green, chief growth officer, took charge in 2020, completing ten deals. Together the brothers, who are the sons of Michael Green, founder of Carlton Communications, own about 20 per cent of the company.

Brave Bison's previous acquisitions have included SocialChain, co-founded by podcaster Steven Bartlett, as well as MiniMBA, a marketing skills and training firm, bought from Centaur Media for £19 million — its largest deal to date.

In November, it tabled a £50 million bid for M&C Saatchi's media planning and buying business, rejected for "fundamentally" undervaluing the division.

Brave Bison is backed by Lord Ashcroft, the former Conservative Party deputy chairman, as well as News Corp, the ultimate parent of The Times.

Firms shelve products due to tech giants' dominance

Helen Cahill Financial Correspondent

More than a third of tech-intensive businesses have shelved a product owing to concerns about the dominance of a major technology company, according to new research.

The Institute for Public Policy Research, an influential think tank, has found 35 per cent of businesses decided not to offer a new product over the past few years because a tech giant already dominated its target market.

The think tank has said businesses "of all sizes pay the price" of the power concentrated among America's largest companies, and warned that successive governments have allowed "a small number of firms to build extraordinary control over infrastructure on which the wider economy depends".

The think tank's findings come from a survey of 417 businesses in the UK that rely on large technology companies or digital infrastructure providers for their operations, such as data storage or cloud computing. Its report found 79 per cent of firms are worried about giant tech firms using their power to reduce competition.

The Competition & Markets Authority has set up a division known as the Digital Markets Unit (DMU) to regulate the technology giants and limit any anti-competitive practices.

Roa Powell, senior research fellow at the IPPR, said the dominance of large technology firms was "limiting competition and making it harder for new firms to innovate and grow".

Powell said: "Businesses see stronger competition as part of the solution — it can mean more choice, lower prices and better products, while giving UK challengers more room to scale. The CMA has the tools to improve competition, what it needs now is political backing from the government to act boldly."

Business

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Global Select Fund R ‡	229.21		+0.50	...
High Income Fund R Inc ‡	67.06		+0.02	...
Income Fund R Acc ‡	807.99		-1.29	...
Income Fund R Inc ‡	309.69		-0.49	...
Monthly Dist & R Inc ‡	92.79		+0.21	...
SmartGarp Eurp Equity R ‡	896.36		-0.60	...
SmartGarp Global Equity R ‡	697.62		+1.49	...
SmartGarp UK Equity R ‡	4287.04		-5.96	...
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡	94.96		-0.24	...
Strategic Bd R M Acc ‡	116.7		+0.28	...
Strategic Bd R M Inc ‡	52.76		+0.13	...
Strategic Bd R Q Acc ‡	116.5		+0.28	...
Strategic Bd R Q Inc ‡	52.63		+0.13	...
UK Select R Acc ‡	1344.38		-4.05	...
Uk Smaller Cos R Acc ‡	2353.4		+0.79	...
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡	1104.99		-0.29	...

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	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
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UK Select Opps Inc ‡	2142		-8.00	1.10
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡	332.9		-0.90	0.37
UK Sust Eqty R Dis ‡	237.9		-0.30	1.10

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	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Gwth Acc R ‡	288.1		...	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡	162.3		...	1.51

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	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Growth ‡	298.5		-0.03	1.14
Sus Leaders ‡	1030		-0.19	1.47
UK Growth ‡@	882.6		-0.29	1.69
UK Income ‡@	260		-0.08	3.83

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COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Enqs:0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 6083

Share Class 1-Retail

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Gwth & Inc ‡	1608		+1	0.10
FTSE All Shr Track ‡	601		-0.5	2.70
Global Gwth SCI ‡	399.8		+1.6	...
Strategic Bd ‡	229		+0.5	4.00

EDENTREE INV MGMT
0800 358 3010

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Sust Eur Eqty A Dis ‡@	498.4		-0.20	1.84
Sust Gbl Eqty A Dis ‡@	457.9		+0.10	0.53
Sust Mgd Income ‡@	142		...	4.02
Sust Sterling Bond A Dis ‡	85.24		+0.09	4.99
Sust UK Eqty A Dis ‡@	254.7		-0.40	1.77
Sust UK Eqty Opps A Dis ‡@	331.3		-0.30	1.47

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL
Private Clnts:0800 414161 Broker Dlgs:0800 414181

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Spec ‡	2920		...	...
American ‡	7906		...	...
Euro Opps ‡	748.3		...	0.48
European ‡	4428		...	0.77
Global Focus ‡	3699		...	...
Global High Income Bond A Dis ‡	22.39		...	6.38
Global Special Sits ‡	8931		...	...
Japan ‡	976.8		...	0.34
Moneyblder Bal ‡	49.1		...	3.51
Moneyblder Inc ‡	28.28		...	5.02
Moneyblder UK Ind ‡	203.32		...	2.46
Special Sits ‡	7568		...	1.63

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Opportunities Fund A Dis ‡	106.8		...	1.69

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS
01296 386 386

Authorised Inv Funds

Share Class C

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bond ‡	37.39		...	4.70
Intl Gwth ‡	215.7		...	0.60
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡	109.3		...	...
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡	121.5		...	...

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK)
Enq:0845 745 6123 Dlg:0845 745 6126 Mon-Frid:8-6

HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Ind Acc ‡	1611		+5	0.78
Euro Ind Acc ‡	1857		...	2.28
Euro Ind Inc ‡	1076		...	2.33
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡	443.5		-0.7	2.48
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡	180.1		-0.2	2.63
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡	414.2		+0.4	2.84
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡	224.6		+0.2	2.83
FTSE All-S Acc ‡	1117		-2	2.64
FTSE FTSE All-S Inc ‡	502.7		-0.5	2.78
Japan Ind Acc ‡	233.5		+1.6	1.45
Japan Ind Inc ‡	169.4		+1.2	1.49
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	1081		+10	1.53
Pacific Ind Inc ‡	611.5		+5.7	1.55

HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) Retail Share Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd Acc ‡@	312.4		+0.6	4.10
Income Acc ‡	1062		...	3.28
Monthly Inc Acc ‡@	313.4		...	3.75
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	155.9		...	4.02
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ‡@	224.2		-0.7	3.00
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inv ‡@	86.91		-0.25	3.06

HSBC Specialist Investment Fds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Index Retail Inc ‡	1241		+4	0.77

INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD
Dling:0800 085 8571 Inv Serv:0800 085 8677

Brkr Serv:0800 028 2121

Invesco Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond ‡	231.91		...	4.07
High Income Dis ‡	435.43		...	3.13
Income & Growth Dis ‡	507.33		...	3.08
Income Inc ‡	1683.38		...	2.84
Money Acc ‡	108.02		...	3.64
Monthly Inc Plus Dis ‡	92.52		...	5.72
UK Opps UK Acc ‡	1406.04		...	1.46
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡	1365.59		...	1.20

INVESTEC FUND MGRS LTD
Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900

OEIC Series I, ii,iii & iv

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American A Acc ‡	877.9		-1.36	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡	474.06		+0.42	2.62
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	271.73		+0.26	2.51
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡	333.99		+0.74	0.21
Diversified Growth Inc ‡	122.9		+0.27	0.96
Diversified Income A Acc ‡	377.3		+0.06	3.88
Diversified Income A Inc ‡	67.94		+0.01	5.28
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Ac ‡	144.72		+0.38	5.76
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡	67.04		+0.18	7.45
Emerging Mkts Equity A Ac ‡	293.94		+1.47	0.04
Emerging Mkts Leaders A Acc ‡	1251.9		+8.53	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡	302.27		-0.17	...
Global Franchise A Acc ‡	408.51		+0.33	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡	2104.17		+9.9	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡	649.6		+8.77	...
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡	540.05		+1.11	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡	414.31		+0.85	...

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡	2757.11		-3.76	1.03
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡	948.2		-1.29	1.04

For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEIC)

JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS
Investor Serv: 0800 832 831 Dlng:0845 946 4646

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
All Stcks Credit A Inc ‡	113.9		...	4.50
Asian Div Inc U Trust Inc ‡	101.1		...	5.60
Cautious Managed Fd A Acc ‡	359.4		...	3.80
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	154.2		...	3.90
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡	1304		...	0.10
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡	305		...	...
Erpn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡	3261		...	0.20
Fix IntMnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡	33.23		...	5.90
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡	6542		...	...
Global Equity Income A Ac ‡	88.42		...	2.30
Global Tech A Acc ‡	6840		...	...
Instl UK idx Opps A Acc ‡	181.07		...	2.10
M-Asset Abs Rtn A Acc ‡	189.5		...	2.70
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡	337.2		+1.4	1.80
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡	161.6		...	2.80
M-Man Inc Fd Grth A Acc ‡	232.9		...	2.70
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡	230.1		...	4.30
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡	55.58		...	4.30
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡	95.72		...	5.70
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡	207.2		...	2.10
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡	201		...	1.20
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡	2962		...	...

J.P. MORGAN ASSET MANAGEMENT
OEIC

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Equity Core E Net Acc ‡@	714.1000		-0.8000	2.51

JUPITER UT TRUST MANAGERS LTD
020 7581 3020

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Distribution & Growth ‡	124.72		-0.1941	2.93
Euro Special Sits ‡	599.69		-0.2430	0.71
European ‡	3990.87		-0.2470	0.61
Financial Opps ‡	1353.46		+0.2174	1.01
Global Macro Bd L GBP ACC ‡	427.86		+0.5205	3.87
Merlin Bal Acc ‡	346.39		-0.1434	2.26
Merlin Growth Acc ‡	835.09		+0.3632	0.20

BM BROOKS MACDONALD | BM BROOKS FINANCIAL

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	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Merlin Inc Acc ‡@	471.39		+0.2344	3.40
Merlin Wwide Inc ‡	611.69		+0.4418	...
UK Dynamic Equity L Dis ‡	294.3		-0.0808	1.75
UK Growth ‡	286.35		-0.2655	0.64
UK Income Trust ‡	1024.43		+0.0508	4.58

LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MANGRS) LTD
Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Ind Acc ‡@	815.3		+0.2	1.90
Euro Ind Inc ‡	486.8		+0.1	1.90
Fixed Int Acc ‡	150.6		+0.3	4.60
Fixed Int Dist ‡	62.24		+0.13	4.60
Global Health ‡	127.8		-0.2	0.90
Glob Tech Acc ‡@	232.9		+1.3	...
High Inc Acc ‡@	154.6		+0.2	5.70
Japan Ind Acc ‡	112.1		+0.7	1.30
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	425.9		+4.1	1.30
UK Index Trust Acc ‡	542.4		-0.6	2.50
Uk Index Trust Dist ‡	234.8		-0.3	2.50
US Ind Acc ‡	1409		+6	0.50
Worldwide Acc ‡	470.2		+0.9	0.90

M&G SECURITIES
Enq:0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196

Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Charifund Inc ‡	1921		+0.0182	5.08

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Extra Income Inc ‡	830.58		-0.0445	5.08
Gilt & Fxd Int Inc ‡	67.11		+0.224	4.77
Gl Hi Yd Bd Inc ‡	39.91		+0.1003	6.26
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	101.73		+0.2958	1.57
Index Trckr Inc ‡	105.38		-0.0948	2.98
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡	25.39		+0.0788	4.28
UK Select A Inc ‡	3359.84		+0.1897	2.60

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd A Inc ‡	32.83		+0.2137	5.07
Dividend Inc ‡	66.88		-0.0747	5.34
Recovery A Inc ‡	142.65		-0.098	2.84
Sml Cos Inc ‡	366.1		+0.2629	2.80

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡	161.83		+0.1547	3.79

MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST
0808 005 5555

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
High Income ‡	87.08		...	4.60
High Income Acc ‡	297.1		...	4.60
UK 100 Comp Acc ‡	723		...	3.10
UK 100 Comp Inc ‡	325.3		...	3.10
UK Select Port ‡	481.4		...	2.90
UK Select Port Acc ‡	1101.3		...	2.90
W'wide Mgd Acc ‡@	1333		...	0.20
Worldwide Mgd Acc ‡@	741.6		...	0.20

MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT
Enquiries: 0800 0961 962

The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)

Class A Shares

Equity

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡	1049.40		...	1.54
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡	938.65		...	1.55
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡	936.69		...	1.49
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡	1046.53		...	1.47
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡	1036.68		...	1.65
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡	989.88		...	1.66
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡	1034.12		...	1.57
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡	989.45		...	1.60
Glob Br Eq Fund F Inc ‡	1125.23		...	4.24
Glob Br Eq Fund I Acc ‡	1772.43		...	4.21
Glob Br Eq Fund I Inc ‡	1189.44		...	4.32
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	14378.5		...	0.32
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	1673.31		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1783.58		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	3867.35		...	0.32
Glob Quality Fund F Acc (PH) ‡	1565.23		...	0.49
Glob Quality Fund F Inc ‡	1518.71		...	0.51
Glob Quality Fund I Acc ‡	1560.63		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1559.73		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund F Acc ‡	1577.2		...	0.51
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡	144.78		...	4.87
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡	98.18		...	4.89
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡	1382.58		...	4.72
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡	3062.8		...	4.72
US Adv F F Acc ‡	2463.84		...	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡	1492.67		...	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡	2593.85		...	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡	1545.33		...	...

SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS
08457 413002

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Inc Inc ‡	238.2		...	...
Stkmkt 100 Tkr ‡	230.8000		...	...
UK Growth I Acc ‡	661.2		...	...
UK Growth Inc ‡	317.5		...	...

SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRES LTD
0141 248 6100

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Far Eastern Inc	617.0700	649.4700	...	...
Mutual Far Eastern	1382.2200	1458.8100	+14.12	0.39
Mutual UK Eq	1429.4900	1508.7000	...	7.81

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Equity Inc	562.2300	593.3800	...	7.81

SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MNGRS
0845 300 2244

Overseas Growth Investment Funds

Tracker & Special Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr A Acc ‡	610.5		+2.20	2.50
UK Trkr A Inc ‡	277.8		+1.00	2.50

UK & Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond A Acc ‡@	329.4		+1.10	4.20
Corp Bond A Inc ‡@	108.0		+0.30	4.20
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡	472.0		-1.50	2.10
Hi Inc Bond A Ac ‡@	299.3		+0.20	6.40
Hi Inc Bond A Inc ‡@	70.52		+0.04	6.40
Hi Res A Acc ‡	565.9		+1.70	3.70
Hi Res A Inc ‡	153.2		+0.50	3.80
Strat In A Acc ‡@	230.2		+1.70	4.60
Strat In A Inc ‡@	86.72		+0.66	4.60
UK Eq Trckr A ‡	137.5		+0.50	2.50

OEIC B Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr B Acc ‡	676.3		+2.40	2.60
UK Trkr B Inc ‡	276.3		+1.00	2.60

OEIC C Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Eq Tkr C ‡	134.3		+0.50	2.60

STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS
0845 279 3003

Investment Funds (OEIC)-Retail Shares

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡	98.65		...	2.52
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡	51.2		...	2.52
AAA Income Acc ‡	108.80		...	...
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡	283.50		...	...
Glb Advtg CAT Acc ‡	203		...	1.32
Glob Advtg Acc ‡	267.50		...	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡	186.30		...	...
Higher Inc Inc ‡	48.21		...	...
Managed Acc ‡	523.2		...	1.83
UK Ethical Acc ‡	261.20		...	...
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡	823.30		...	...

SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS
Enquiries:0141 222 1151

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced A Acc ‡	186.54		...	2.02
Blanced A Inc ‡	157.88		...	2.07
Cautious A Acc ‡	133.43		...	2.44
Cautious A Inc ‡	105.53		...	2.48
Dynamic A Acc ‡	497.36		...	1.40
Dynamic A Inc ‡	435.16		...	1.41
Growth A Acc ‡	492.21		...	1.63
Income A Acc ‡	319.53		...	2.17

THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Client Serv: 0800 0684000

Retail Shares Class 1

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡	39.4019		+0.36	...
Threadneedle Mnthly Etr Inc Inc ‡	101.9428		+13.85	...
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Bd Inc ‡	54.9823		+13.29	...
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Acc ‡	54.8733		+13.21	...
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡	39.5787		+9.87	...
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡	41.8339		+5.7	...
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡	120.6873		+27.33	...
Threadneedle UK Growth & inc Rtl Inc ‡	113.1855		+16.13	...
Threadneedle UK Istl Rtl ‡	251.3848		-37.15	...
Threadneedle UK Mnthly Inc Rtl Inc ‡	90.2555		+14.49	...
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡	168.8509		-41.47	...
Theadneedle U Smaller Coms Rtl Inc ‡	409.5112		+163.77	...

For Resolution see Ignis

TU FUND MANAGERS LTD

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
IFSL Marlborough Eur A Dis1012	1012		...	1.21

* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend; ‡Middle price; . . . No significant data. # Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

British funds

Index-Linked

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
73.08	63.68	Tr IL 0 ½% 50	64.20	- .32	0.78	2.52
66.33	56.73	Tr IL 0 ¼% 52	57.33	- .29	0.44	2.53
101.91	97.20	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 28	99.53	- .20	0.13	0.37
100.99	97.50	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 29	98.46	- .21	0.13	0.73
98.88	94.73	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 31	95.84	- .20	0.13	0.99
88.33	82.97	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 36	83.65	- .18	0.15	1.89
82.85	76.16	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 39	77.60	- .21	0.16	2.17
79.32	72.11	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 41	72.94	- .26	0.17	2.27
74.05	65.19	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 44	67.16	- .22	0.19	2.43
71.23	62.80	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 46	63.51	- .34	0.20	2.49
68.00	59.19	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 48	59.88	- .34	0.21	2.51
60.61	49.87	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 56	50.58	- .36	0.25	2.45
58.90	48.59	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 58	49.49	- .33	0.25	2.42
54.25	43.57	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 65	44.22	- .41	0.28	2.29
53.89	40.40	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 68	43.14	- .38	0.29	2.23
57.66	42.98	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 73	44.46	- .35	0.28	1.94
97.88	93.36	Tr IL 0 ¾% 34	94.03	- .23	0.80	1.59
79.12	70.87	Tr IL 0 ¾% 47	71.58	- .35	1.05	2.48
62.70	49.79	Tr IL 0 ⅜% 62	52.23	- .30	0.72	2.37
87.38	80.77	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 40	81.34	- .23	0.77	2.23
84.28	76.40	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 42	77.01	- .27	0.81	2.33
104.16	100.95	Tr IL 1 ¼% 27	101.33	- .12	1.23	0.17
103.67	99.28	Tr IL 1 ¼% 32	99.92	- .20	1.25	1.26
86.56	72.33	Tr IL 1 ¼% 54	74.80	- .38	1.67	2.50
85.60	73.36	Tr IL 1 ¼% 55	74.36	- .39	1.68	2.49
99.52	94.19	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 35	94.75	- .15	1.19	1.75
97.09	90.76	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 37	91.34	- .22	1.23	1.99
102.53	95.86	Tr IL 1 ¾% 38	96.57	- .18	1.81	2.07
99.42	88.49	Tr IL 1 ⅞% 49	89.35	- .36	2.10	2.48
248.27	236.46	Tr IL 2% 35	241.73	- .54	0.83	1.76
349.35	338.55	Tr IL 4 ⅛% 30	341.77	- .82	1.21	0.97

Longs (Over 15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
26.99	21.99	Tr 0 ½% 61	22.67	- .18	2.21	5.49
65.04	55.40	Tr 0 ⅛% 51	56.24	- .31	0.22	2.53
38.39	32.78	Tr 0 ⅝% 50	33.62	- .13	1.86	5.74
47.60	40.99	Tr 1 ½% 53	41.77	- .14	3.59	5.80
45.88	39.62	Tr 1 ¼% 51	40.44	- .15	3.09	5.80
33.04	27.34	Tr 1 ⅛% 73	27.85	- .17	4.04	5.31
48.44	41.83	Tr 1 ¾% 57	42.46	- .15	4.12	5.75
48.36	41.73	Tr 1 ⅝% 54	42.62	- .16	3.81	5.77
41.45	35.52	Tr 1 ⅝% 71	36.08	- .20	4.50	5.44
57.14	49.72	Tr 2 ½% 65	50.57	- .16	4.94	5.66
74.02	64.55	Tr 3 ½% 68	65.72	- .23	5.33	5.64
81.50	72.00	Tr 3 ¾% 52	73.30	- .20	5.12	5.74
80.90	71.30	Tr 3 ¾% 53	72.47	- .21	5.17	5.77
88.15	77.58	Tr 4 ¼% 55	78.90	- .22	5.39	5.75
83.52	73.28	Tr 4% 60	74.46	- .20	5.37	5.72

Mediums (5-15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
83.19	79.47	Tr 0 ¼% 31	81.51	- .05	0.31	4.47
86.27	82.79	Tr 0 ⅜% 30	84.77	- .06	0.44	4.43
72.25	67.14	Tr 0 ⅝% 35	68.93	- .09	0.91	4.98
79.97	75.46	Tr 0 ⅞% 33	77.17	- .09	1.13	4.79
48.97	42.75	Tr 0 ⅞% 46	43.77	- .16	2.00	5.70
54.44	47.82	Tr 1 ½% 47	48.81	- .16	3.07	5.73
61.88	55.55	Tr 1 ¼% 41	57.05	- .13	2.19	5.45
66.75	60.85	Tr 1 ⅛% 39	62.45	- .12	1.80	5.29
75.83	69.99	Tr 1 ¾% 37	71.43	- .12	2.45	5.18
55.77	49.19	Tr 1 ¾% 49	50.04	- .17	3.50	5.74
85.07	81.01	Tr 1% 32	82.76	- .07	1.21	4.63
82.54	74.42	Tr 3 ½% 45	75.66	- .18	4.63	5.64
95.49	90.74	Tr 3 ¼% 33	91.90	- .09	3.54	4.73
80.41	72.57	Tr 3 ¼% 44	73.89	- .17	4.40	5.62
100.00	85.76	Tr 3 ¾% 38	87.32	- .13	4.29	5.24
102.40	96.34	Tr 4 ½% 34	97.57	- .10	4.61	4.87
101.93	0.01	Tr 4 ½% 35	96.92	- .10	4.64	4.95
96.45	87.54	Tr 4 ½% 42	89.04	- .19	5.05	5.53
102.33	0.01	Tr 4 ¼% 32	98.18	- .09	4.33	4.61
100.56	94.70	Tr 4 ¼% 34	95.90	- .11	4.43	4.88
99.39	92.65	Tr 4 ¼% 36	94.08	- .13	4.52	5.04
100.00	88.42	Tr 4 ¼% 39	89.95	- .16	4.72	5.33
100.00	86.92	Tr 4 ¼% 40	88.59	- .16	4.80	5.41
90.97	81.54	Tr 4 ¼% 46	83.03	- .20	5.12	5.67
89.58	79.95	Tr 4 ¼% 49	81.34	- .20	5.22	5.71
101.49	97.47	Tr 4 ⅛% 31	98.28	- .06	4.20	4.55
100.70	95.57	Tr 4 ⅛% 33	96.59	- .09	4.27	4.74
104.72	100.54	Tr 4 ¾% 30	101.14	- .07	4.70	4.45
103.33	96.78	Tr 4 ¾% 35	98.09	- .12	4.84	5.01
102.00	93.84	Tr 4 ¾% 38	95.36	- .15	4.98	5.27
102.58	98.98	Tr 4 ⅜% 30	99.63	- .06	4.39	4.49
97.07	89.07	Tr 4 ⅜% 40	90.51	- .16	4.83	5.38
100.37	99.68	Tr 4 ⅝% 32	99.93	- .09	4.63	4.64
100.00	94.52	Tr 4 ⅝% 37	95.81	- .14	4.83	5.15
100.99	96.96	Tr 4 ⅞% 36	98.36	- .12	4.96	5.09
105.68	96.52	Tr 5 ¼% 41	98.20	- .18	5.35	5.43
105.44	93.20	Tr 5 ⅜% 56	94.74	- .27	5.67	5.75

Shorts (Under 5 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
91.87	89.09	Tr 0 ½% 29	91.30	- .02	0.55	4.31
98.67	91.49	Tr 0 ⅛% 28	94.64	+ .01	0.13	4.03
99.52	96.22	Tr 0 ⅜% 26	99.50	+ .01	0.38	3.66
91.00	0.01	Tr 0 ⅞% 29	89.74	- .05	0.98	4.39
97.49	95.29	Tr 1 ¼% 27	97.45	+ ...	1.28	4.19
95.46	92.89	Tr 1 ⅝% 28	94.55	- .03	1.72	4.30
101.17	98.03	Tr 4% 29	98.86	- .04	4.05	4.45
101.39	99.44	Tr 4 ¼% 27	100.00	- .03	4.25	4.24
101.88	98.28	Tr 4 ⅛ % 29	99.13	- .05	4.16	4.45
100.70	99.60	Tr 4 ⅛% 27	100.04	- ...	4.12	3.99
101.65	99.40	Tr 4 ⅜% 28	100.06	- .02	4.37	4.33
107.15	103.38	Tr 6% 28	103.74	- .05	5.78	4.26

* maturities having an eight-month indexation lag.

This is a paid for information service. For further details on a particular fund, readers should contact their fund manager.

Data provided by ICE. Data as shown is for information purposes only. No offer is made by ICE or this publication

TIMES Events

Delia Smith's Nine Ingredients to Change our World

Delia Smith taught a nation how to cook; now, one of Britain's most trusted voices is calling for a different kind of transformation. Join Delia in conversation with chief correspondent **Martin Samuel** to discuss her new book, *Us: Nine Ingredients to Change Our World*. Drawing on a lifetime of experience, Delia will explore the values that bind us together and why real political change must grow from the ground up.

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APRIL 2025 Which? Best Buy CORDLESS VACUUM CLEANERS

"The Halo is nothing short of fantastic at cleaning!" *Which?*

YOU'VE probably noticed it yourself. Most cordless vacuums promise a lot... but in everyday use, they can feel heavy, lose suction too quickly, and make emptying a messy, unpleasant job. So instead of making cleaning easier, they often turn it into more of a chore. That's exactly why the Halo Capsule has been designed differently.

Weighs less than competitors
First, it's super lightweight. At just 2.6kg, you can carry it easily from room to room, lift it to clean stairs, or reach high-up areas without strain on your arms or back.

High performance cordless
Then there's the performance. With powerful suction that rivals full-size corded vacuums, Halo Capsule picks up more dirt, dust and pet hair first time — so you're not wasting time going over the same spots again and again.

Cleaner cleaning & emptying
And when it comes to emptying, there's no cloud of dust and no need to touch the dirt. Instead, the high-capacity bag system seals everything neatly away, so you can dispose of it quickly, cleanly and hygienically.

Huge 1.6 litre bag capacity
It holds far more than most cordless vacuums — meaning fewer trips to the bin for more uninterrupted cleaning.

Lasting power & performance
Add in a long-lasting battery with up to 140 minutes of runtime, and you have a cordless vacuum that delivers on its promise to be cleaner, lighter and more powerful than its competitors.

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Ultra lightweight 2.6Kg

Unrivalled 1.6L bag capacity

One touch power

Wall mountable

Easy clean-ups

Full manoeuvrability

Versatile tools

Low profile cleaning

Capsule™ **The Capsule Advantage**

	HENRY QUICK	HALO CAPSULE	SHARK CORDLESS	DYSON V15
Weight	3.2Kg	**2.6Kg**	4.1Kg	3.1Kg
Dirt Capacity	1 Litre	**1.6 Litres**	0.7 Litres	0.77 Litres
Bag Material	Plastic	**Paper/Card**	Bagless	Bagless
Voltage	25.2V	**32V**	25.2V	25.2V
Wattage	300W	**380W**	350W	660W
Run Time	Over 60 mins	**Over 60 mins**	Under 60 mins	Over 60 mins
Recharge Time	2.5 hrs	**2 hrs**	3.5hrs	4.5hrs
Main Material	Plastic	**Carbon Fibre**	Plastic	Plastic

OVER 50% OFF
The Halo Great Value Bundle

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Capsule Vacuum Cleaner, Wall Dock, Crevice Tool, Upholstery & Dusting Combo Tool, Power Floor Tool & Flex Hose, and a full year's worth of Halo Dust Pouches.

Experience the difference for yourself

Most cordless vacuums struggle to pick up everything in one go — meaning more passes, more effort, and more time spent cleaning.

Halo Capsule is different. Its powerful suction and high-capacity bag system work together to capture more dust, dirt and pet hair first time — not just move it around. The result? A visibly deeper clean, fewer trips to the bin, and far less hassle every time you vacuum. Save over £300 when you order today!

Halo | Other cordless vacuums

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2 year manufacturer's warranty including battery. When compared to other UK market available large capacity cordless vacuums based on independent tests to IEC62886-2:2016 Sec 5.3. *Run times quoted may vary depending on surfaces cleaned. **Hygienic emptying measured to IEC62885-2:2016 Sec.5.11 Filtration efficiency and dust re-emission of the dry vacuum cleaner - Modified for cordless samples. Halo Capsule vs Leading Bagless competitor in Independent tests. †Combined performance across weight, cleaning performance and dust collection capacity versus leading UK cordless stick vacuum competitors. Free Delivery to UK mainland addresses (including Highlands). Halo Appliances Ltd. Warwickshire, England.

tradingref.com

Robert Stephens ***Tempus***

Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips

Book a rewarding stay at hotel giant

INTERCONTINENTAL HOTELS GROUP

Market cap	First-half revenue
£17.8 billion	$2.7bn

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) recently released half-year results that showed it is performing extremely well despite an ongoing uncertain operating environment.

The FTSE 100 travel and leisure business posted a 13 per cent rise in earnings per share (EPS), with all of its brands and key regions delivering positive revenue per available room (RevPAR) growth — a key industry indicator of performance.

Given that the firm is on track to produce a further rapid rise in profitability over the coming years as it benefits from a sound growth strategy and an eventual upturn in the consumer outlook, does it offer investment appeal?

While the first InterContinental-branded hotel opened in Brazil in 1949, the company can trace its history to 1777 when William Bass opened his namesake brewery in Burton-on-Trent. After many acquisitions, disposals and corporate strategy shifts, IHG became a standalone company in 2003.

It now owns 21 hotel brands including Holiday Inn, Hotel Indigo and Kimpton and operates in over 100 countries. Its hotels are mostly franchises, with IHG rarely owning the property itself and typically receiving a royalty fee amounting to 5-6 per cent of rooms' revenue. This asset-light business model provides scope for rapid expansion due to its reduced capital requirements.

Indeed, the company's half-year results stated that its pipeline has grown by 3 per cent year on year, to 348,000 rooms. They represent around a third of its current total estate, with roughly half under construction. When combined with the firm's relatively high proportion of fixed costs, this should act as a catalyst on its financial performance.

IHG is forecast to post a 14 per cent annualised rise in EPS over the next two financial years. While roughly double the typical annual earnings growth rate of a FTSE 100 member, this is in line with the company's aim of delivering for a 12-15 per cent annual rise in profits on a per share basis over the medium to long term.

As well as the impact of a $950 million share buyback programme on EPS during the current year, the firm's financial performance is set to benefit from falling inflation across its key markets. Notably, inflation in the US, where the firm generates 57 per cent of its underlying revenue, is set to ease to meet the central bank's 2 per cent target by the end of 2028.

This should boost spending power among consumers after sustained cost of living challenges, as well as provide scope for interest rate cuts that do likewise. And with several of its brands commanding relatively high levels of customer loyalty, IHG has pricing power that, alongside growing occupancy levels from an increasingly upbeat consumer outlook, could further boost its top and bottom-line growth rates.

Geopolitical and economic risks present possible threats to its upward growth trajectory in the near term. A continuing conflict in the Middle East, which accounts for 5 per cent of the firm's revenue, could prompt heightened share price volatility in the short run. So, too, could a continued slower-than-expected decline in inflation, which remains materially above central bank targets across the company's key markets.

However, a solid financial position suggests the firm is well placed to overcome potential near-term challenges in what remains a highly cyclical industry. For instance, its net interest costs were covered nearly eight times by operating profits in the first half of the current year.

And with a diverse range of value-focused brands in its portfolio, the firm is in a relatively strong position to take advantage of consumers trading down to cheaper options should cost of living challenges persist for longer than anticipated.

Undoubtedly, IHG has a very rich market valuation after its 167 per cent share price rise over the past five years. It is trading on a price-to-earnings (P/E) ratio of 32.9, far greater than the FTSE 100's earnings multiple of 18 and suggesting that a material upward rerating is unlikely.

However, the firm's fast-paced earnings growth prospects mean it still offers good value for money. When combined with its solid finances, strong competitive position and ambitious growth strategy, IHG continues to have significant long-term investment appeal.

ADVICE Buy
WHY Better operating outlook is set to catalyse the financial and share-price performance

InterContinental drift

Industry and aerospace help support FTSE 100

MARKET REPORT

There was a defensive feel to the mid-week session which saw investors rotate out of most tech-related stocks and into industrials and aerospace but not quite enough to stop the end of a six-day winning run for the FTSE 100 (Robert Miller writes).

By the close of trading the main index had dipped 8.04 points, or 0.1 per cent, to 10,878.12, the biggest fall since August 17 but still only 0.3 per cent off its record close on February 27 of 10,910.55.

In the aerospace sector **Rolls-Royce** advanced 13p, or 0.9 per cent, to £15.43 and **Melrose Industries** gained ¾p, or 0.2 per cent, to 511p while of the industrial stocks, **Halma**, the safety, health, and environmental technology group, was up 40p, or 1.1 per cent, to £36.16.

The best FTSE 100 performer, however, was **JD Sports Fashion** as the self-styled "king of trainers" was seen as a bargain by investors after last week's sharp drop following a cut to the full-year profit guidance. The shares, which have recovered well, rose another 2½p, or 3 per cent, to 87¾p but remain 7.4 per cent lower over the past month.

On the downside, **Sage Group**, the business software company, was the biggest FTSE 100 faller, down 41½p, or 3.8 per cent, to £10.63 as **Autotrader**, the online motor marketplace, shed 10p, or 1.8 per cent, to close at 539¼p.

Oil continued to play its part, as it has done since the outbreak of the war in the Gulf, this time with a drop despite the price of Brent crude posting a small gain in London late afternoon. Brent crude, the global benchmark, was 0.1 per cent higher at $87.39 a barrel but **BP** dropped 5¾p, or 1.1 per cent, to 522¾p and **Shell** was down 15½p, or 0.5 per cent, to £33.71.

The bright spot of the day for investors was the more UK-focused FTSE 250 which rose 41.79 points, or 0.2 per cent, to 24,897.84. The South American miner **Hochschild Mining** topped the leaderboard, up 33½p, or 5.4 per cent, to 659p as the rising price of gold and silver in the first half of the year more than tripled its interim profit.

Watches of Switzerland was up by 26p, or 3.8 per cent, at 711p, as investors continued to see an upside for luxury watch and jewellery retailer after it reported record annual revenue last week, with continued growth in the US offsetting a resilient but more mature UK market.

Wall Street report

Indices ended marginally lower as the US and Iran appeared to be inching towards a deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and data showed annual inflation unexpectedly held steady in July. "The market has been looking for a reason to pull back a little bit," James Ragan of wealth manager DA Davidson said. The S&P 500 slid just 1.58 points, or 0.02 per cent, to 7,675.70, while the Nasdaq was down 21.10 points, or 0.1 per cent, at 26,130.20. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 113.52 points, or 0.2 per cent, to 53,463.88.

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
JD Sports Fashion	3.0%
IG Group	2.7%
British American Tobacco	2.5%
Howden Joinery	2.4%
Standard Chartered	2.0%
Autotrader	-1.8%
AstraZeneca	-1.9%
3i Group	-2.1%
Compass	-2.3%
Sage Group	-3.8%

SWATCH

Watches of Switzerland was up after reporting record annual revenue last week

NEWS IN BRIEF

Visa scheme dodged rules

The City regulator has banned three former senior financiers behind a £35.5 million scheme designed to bypass visa rules in which clients paid a £400,000 fee instead of investing £2 million in UK companies.

The Financial Conduct Authority said the scheme was deliberately designed to create the false impression that visa requirements set out by the Home Office had been met. At least 99 individuals obtained investor visas for businesses connected to Dolfin Financial Limited between 2016 and 2019.

Its former chief executive, Denisz Nagy, was fined £324,800 including a 30 per cent discount after agreeing to settle. Nagy and Roman Joukovski, Dolfin's co-founder, have both been banned from working in financial services. Joukovski has referred his decision notice to the FCA's Upper Tribunal. The former finance director Sanjay Maraj, who was responsible for the financial aspects once the scheme was set up, was fined £122,000 after agreeing to settle.

The FCA, said: "These individuals ran a scheme designed to get around the UK's investor visa rules, undermining their purpose of attracting genuine investment into the UK. They then sought to hide how it operated."

Dolfin entered special administration in June 2021, and the insolvency processes remain ongoing.

Apple set for new launch

Apple is set to host its next launch event on September 9, where the company is expected to unveil its newest iPhone series and potentially its long-awaited foldable phone. The first foldable iPhone is expected to be a landmark for Apple, with analysts saying that the high-end devices would be the main driver of higher selling prices and margin growth for the company. The launch would also mark incoming Apple chief John Ternus's first major event. Ternus, Apple's longtime hardware chief, is set to take charge at the company on September 1 as Tim Cook moves to be executive chair.

Retail sales fall due to heat

Retail sales fell sharply over the past month as the record hot weather kept shoppers away from the high street. A survey of consumer spending by the CBI dipped to a net weighted balance of -48 per cent in August from -26 per cent in the previous month. Retailers also told the business lobby group's survey that they expected the pace of spending decline to ease, to reflect the forecast for cooler weather after the intense heat. Martin Sartorius, the CBI's principal economist, said: "These weak trading conditions were echoed across the distribution sector and continued to weigh on investment and hiring plans."

Vanguard adds platform

Vanguard Group said yesterday it would acquire the fintech platform Altruist, giving the asset manager greater access to independent financial advisers and expanding its wealth-management capabilities. While the terms of the deal were not disclosed, the Wall Street Journal said the transaction was worth roughly $4 billion. Founded in 2018, Altruist is a wealth-management technology platform used by independent financial advisers. It is a competitor to Charles Schwab and Fidelity's custody businesses. Vanguard also acquired wealth-management technology provider Just Invest in 2021.

Business

EQUITY PRICES

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by ICE Data Services. The yield is the sum of a company's annual 12-month dividend payments divided by the last day's closing share price.
12-month high and low High/low prices for UK equities and investment trusts are based on intra-day figures.

Automobiles & Part

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
86¾	33	Aston Martin Lag	34	-¾	...	-0.7

Banking & Finance

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
265	177½	Aberdeen Group‡	249⅝	+2¾	5.8	11.6
1¼	0⅝	Acuity RM♦	0¾		...	-3.5
4128	2624	Admiral	4128	+56	3.5	16.8
662½	414⅜	AJ Bell	611½	-5	2.4	23.8
28761⅛	22372¾	AON Corp	26107⅞	+27½	0.9	...
1130	765	Arbuthnot♦	820		6.7	7.5
276½	145⅞	Ashmore Group	223¼	-3⅜	7.6	18.3
2126½	1590½	Australia & NZ	1948½	+4¾	5.9	19.0
740⅝	590⅝	Aviva	729¼	-1¼	5.5	27.1
1122	689	Banco Santander	1090	+16	1.5	14.0
554⅛	352⅞	Barclays‡	499½	+3¼	2.3	11.4
17	4	Blue Star Capital♦	5¼		...	-2.7
710	613	BP Marsh & Ptnrs♦	680		5.3	5.1
351¾	212	Bridgepoint Grp	314¾	-1¾	3.0	63.0
353½	264⅝	Chesnara	349½	+10	6.6	-69.2
494	349	City of London Grp	494	+4	6.7	16.7
556⅛	318⅜	Close Bros	420	-8	...	-6.3
753	203	CMC Markets	713	-7	1.9	25.9
2996½	2057	Deutsche Bank	2968¼	+112⅞	2.9	11.0
93	73⅝	EFG-Hermes Hldgs	73⅝	+¼	0.9	...
240¼	136	EPE Special Opps♦	211		...	8.7
85	52	Fiske♦	67½		1.7	5.9
92	80	Foresight Ventures VCT	83		4.3	15.5
4700	2215	Georgia Capital	4450	+35	...	2.8
57	43¼	Hansard Global	51	-½	8.7	39.2
230	194	Helios U/W♦	225		4.4	7.8
1904	1257⅛	Hiscox‡	1835	+8	2.1	13.8
1610	942¾	HSBC‡	1522¼	+5¼	3.6	17.1
1956	1016	IG Group‡	1393	+37	3.1	9.6
204	90⅞	Impax Asset Mgmt♦	115¼	+¾	8.7	7.2
2340	1424⅞	ICG	2012	-6	4.3	12.1
145¾	115⅝	Intl Public P'ship‡	139⅝	-1	6.3	-9.9
690	499⅜	Investec‡	639½	+4	6.0	8.3
78	60	Investment Co	76½	+½	...	...
75	48	IP Group	72¼	+¼	1.8	10.0
24	6½	Jarvis Securities♦	8		43.8	2.5
214½	113⅜	Jupiter Fund Mgmt‡	172¾	+1⅜	3.5	9.0
700	549	Lancashire Hldgs‡	610½		2.7	6.9
318⅛	217¼	Legal & General‡	291⅛	+1¾	7.5	29.1
13620	6905	Lion Finance Group	13350	+20	2.4	9.4
375	223	Liontrust Asset Mgmt	316½	+2	6.0	20.6
61	35	Livermore Invs Grp♦	37⅞		8.3	16.9
117⅞	77⅜	Lloyds Banking‡	111¾	+¼	3.6	16.0
22	14	LMS Capital	15⅝		25.6	...
10140	6684	London Stock Exchange‡	8688	-110	1.8	36.4
367⅛	247	M&G	350	+2	5.9	27.8
327¼	154¼	Man Group‡	307⅜	+3	4.1	27.1
39¾	20	Manx Financial Grp♦	25½		2.0	4.7
10	1¼	Marechale Capital♦	4¾		...	-5.8
186⅜	98¾	Metro Bank	167⅜	-1¾	...	21.5
2621¼	1864⅝	National Australia	2017½	+9¾	4.4	17.3
726	500¼	NatWest Group‡	692	+1¾	5.1	12.9
833⅞	438⅜	PayPoint	626	-2½	6.4	10.6
1238	910¼	Prudential	1039½	+4½	1.9	9.2
1¼	0⅜	Quantum Blockchain♦	0⅜		...	-1.8
209	150¾	Quilter	193½		3.3	21.7
2500	1580	Rathbones Group	1700	-2	5.9	15.8
326	245	Rockwood Strategic	325	+½	...	0.0
2458½	1620	S & U	1965	-5	5.9	10.1
3	0¼	Sancus Lending♦	1¼		...	8.1
59⅛	42¼	Schroder REIT‡	43⅜		8.3	...
599½	358⅝	Schroders	583½		3.8	17.1
1575½	1038¾	St James's Place‡	1182	-1	1.5	11.8
2278	1351½	Standard Chart'd‡	2182	+42	2.3	15.2
948½	615	Standard Life	935½	-1½	5.9	-198.6
6347⅛	4254⅞	Sun Life Canada‡	5832½	-31	3.5	...
6¾	2¾	Tavistock Invs♦	2⅞		3.4	2.4
5200	3615	TBC Bank Grp‡	5105	+139	5.0	7.2
1¾	0¼	Tern♦	1¼		...	-1.5
60	40⅛	Time Finance♦	57⅝		...	9.1
0⅜	0⅛	Tooru♦	0¼		...	-1.7
4	1½	Truetide♦	3¼		...	-5.8
132	75	Vanquis Banking Gp	79	-¾	...	24.7
2800	2000	Volvere♦	2120		...	11.2
7239⅝	5453⅛	Wells Fargo‡	6286¼	+67	2.3	...
2275⅜	1755¾	Westpac Bkg Corp	1784	-1⅞	4.6	16.8
31¾	23	Worsley Investors	28¼	+⅛	...	...
57550	49947¼	Zurich Insurance	54568¾	+206	5.0	18.7

Construction & Property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
357	181	Alumasc♦	230		4.8	8.9
6⅝	4⅜	Aseana Properties	5⅛		...	1.3
2½	1¼	Built Cybernetics♦	2		...	-195.0
973	575½	Balfour Beatty	888	+2½	1.6	16.9
410¼	235⅜	Barratt Redrow	322¼	+1½	5.3	23.7
2890	1715	Bellway	2200	+22	3.3	16.6
4442	2796	Berkeley	3610		...	10.9
1208	800½	Big Yellow Grp	897½	-4½	5.3	...
460	233	Billington Hldgs♦	410	+2½	2.7	39.4
237	133½	Boot (Henry)	154½	+1½	5.1	8.8
383¾	271⅜	Breedon	359	+2	4.2	14.8
451⅝	318⅜	British Land	431⅝	-⅝	5.4	...
2900	2500	Cardiff Property	2750		1.1	20.7
2196	1469⅜	Derwent London	2064	+4	4.0	...
5½	4⅛	DCI Advisors♦	4¾		...	-2.8
19½	11	First Property♦	13½		1.9	7.5
75	29	Fletcher King♦	42½		5.3	28.7
62	31¾	Foxtons Group‡	38⅞	+⅛	3.0	9.0
638	407½	Galliford Try Hldgs	617	-11	3.2	18.3
391½	241	Genuit Group	291⅝		4.4	16.0
435	221	Gleeson (MJ)	274½	+1½	4.0	10.1
1062¾	788⅝	Grafton Grp Units	1050	+12¼	3.6	14.9
205	149½	Grainger	175¼	-¼	4.8	6.4
377	270	Great Portland Est	347¼	-2	2.4	0.0
391¾	263⅜	Hammerson	379¾	+⅜	4.8	...
185	116¾	Harworth Group	178		1.0	61.4
400	215½	Heath (Samuel)♦‡	245		5.3	30.6
236¼	180⅝	Helical	203	+3	1.3	42.0
144	82⅞	Ibstock‡	87¼	+1⅛	2.3	...
161½	112	James Halstead♦	137	-2	6.5	14.1
3518	1238	Keller‡	2980	+8	2.7	14.7
8898	8724⅜	Kingspan Group	8857⅛		0.5	27.9
726	522½	Land Securities	696½	+2	5.9	...
216¼	175¼	LondonMetric Prop	194¾	+¼	6.4	...
24	4½	Macau Prop Opp Fd	4⅞	-⅛	...	-0.3
187⅝	124	Marshalls	164	+¾	4.3	28.8
106	66	Michelmersh Brick♦	75	-1	6.1	18.7
1	0⅜	Mindflair♦	0⅜		...	-1.2
5730	3915	Morgan Sindall	4440	+20	3.7	11.9
10200	8350	Mountview Estates	8600	-125	6.1	16.5
85	65¾	NewRiver REIT	82¼		8.2	...
226	160	Palace Capital	184	+1	8.2	40.9
320	261	Panther Securities♦	280		4.3	11.4
1552	947⅜	Persimmon	1205½	+21½	5.0	13.5
24	15	Plaza Centers	14½		...	-0.1
109⅝	87⅜	Primary Health Props	96⅞	-¼	7.5	...
33⅜	28	Real Estate Inv♦	31¼		4.8	-62.4
849½	554½	Safestore	601½	-6½	5.1	...
1142	791½	Savills	1058	-12	2.2	20.3
5½	0¼	Secure Prop Dev & Inv♦	0½		...	-0.1
997⅞	603	Segro‡	971	+3	3.2	...
155⅛	124⅛	Shaftesbury Capital	151¼	-1½	2.8	8.1
12	6¾	SIG	9	+⅜	...	-1.6
153	105	SigmaRoc♦	132¼	+2⅝	...	18.2
113	86¾	Sirius Real Estate	97½	+⅜	5.6	7.5
140	106	Smart (J)	115		2.8	8.8
23¾	16	Steppe Cement♦	21½		...	19.3
116⅞	74⅛	Taylor Wimpey	85¾	+⅞	4.8	30.6
139	104	Town Centre	127	+4	3.9	...
723½	493⅜	Travis Perkins	659	+6½	1.7	-7.9
175	132¼	Tritax Big Box‡	160¼		5.1	...
737	442¼	Unite Group	522	-6½	7.2	...
746⅜	220	Vistry Group	313¾	+1⅜	...	7.4
434⅜	312	Workspace Group	366¼	+3	7.1	...
930	730	Wynnstay Props♦	915		3.1	12.7

Consumer Goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
229	117⅜	AEP Plantations	195⅝	+2¼	3.1	11.5
30	17⅝	Airea♦	27		3.7	10.6
2359	1729½	AB Foods	2079	+15	3.0	14.7
715⅜	589	Barr (AG)	606	+2	3.1	14.3
5326	3677	British Amer Tob	4238	+105	5.8	12.1
1376½	976	Burberry Group	1088	+8	...	...
177	85⅜	C&C Group	95½	-⅝	5.2	...
5⅞	2⅞	Capital Metals♦	4		...	-34.0
460	271	Churchill China♦	370	+5	5.7	9.3
5195	3270	Coca-Cola HBC	4666	+64	2.2	21.0
1515¾	821	Colefax♦	1440		0.4	10.2
5810	4775	Cranswick‡	5380	-30	2.1	18.2
2116	1295½	Diageo	1736½	+1	2.1	30.2
0¼	0	Distil♦	0		...	-0.6
1918	1160	Evans (M.P.)♦	1760	+2	3.4	10.9
149½	114½	Fevara	139		1.7	6.0
23540	14070	Games Workshop	18800	+260	3.1	30.1
2185⅞	1136⅞	Glanbia‡	1988¼	+36¾	1.9	36.9
307½	191⅛	Greencore	265⅞	-1¾	1.0	20.1
76	4⅝	Headlam	10½	+⅞	...	-0.1
842¼	447⅞	Hilton Food	621	+2	5.6	7.1
3632	2476	Imperial Brands‡	2559	+39	6.5	10.2
7646⅞	5567¼	Kerry Group	7027½	-248	1.8	20.5
172⅝	106¼	McBride	168¼	-⅜	1.8	8.6
250	85	Mulberry Group♦	240		...	-18.5
1250	880	Nichols♦‡	1155	+5	3.4	19.7
374	252	Norcros	326	+2	3.5	...
388⅝	309	Origin Ents♦	382½		3.9	9.0
1	0¼	PACSCo♦	0⅜		...	-0.0
138	47⅛	Portmeirion♦	53		...	-1.2
1½	0½	Provexis♦	1	-⅛	...	-51.0
114	65⅛	PZ Cussons	105	+1	3.5	22.3
138	92	REA	109	-2	...	-211.6
210	155	Tandem♦	180	-6	1.7	11.6
320	220	The Character Grp♦	315	+5	2.2	-46.7
10	5	Ukrproduct Grp♦	7		...	-16.3
5542⅛	3644	Unilever‡	4772	+10½	3.5	12.9
76⅝	19½	Victoria♦	54	-1⅛	...	-0.2

Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
59⅛	10	Assoc Brit Eng	20		...	-6.9
2180	1458	Avon Technologies‡	1806		1.0	70.3
1527	902⅜	Babcock‡	1085½	-7	0.7	25.8
2360	1529	BAE Systems	2088	-10	1.8	30.3
1500	500	Braime A N/V♦	1200		1.4	6.4
2490	1376	Braime Group♦	2350		0.7	12.5
550	350	Caffyns	500		2.0	-12.3
0½	0⅛	Cap XX Ld♦	0⅛		...	-3.5
340	202¼	Castings	306	+8	6.0	17.6
27	12⅜	Checkit♦	20		...	-7.7
650¾	446½	Chemring Group‡	557	+3	1.5	31.3
55	28⅛	Chesterfield Spec Cyl♦	35		...	-38.9
1538	881⅛	Cohort♦‡	1216	+22	1.5	23.3
570	190	Dialight	540	+2	...	...
15	5¾	Feedback♦	6⅞		...	-0.3
1270	463⅛	Gooch & Housego♦	1215	+10	1.1	88.7
28500	9292⅝	Goodwin	18240	+400	1.5	55.8
4902	3194	Halma	3616	+40	0.7	36.7
3220	1994	Hill & Smith	2935	+20	...	28.6
2¾	1¼	Image Scan♦	2⅝		...	-12.4
3166	2216	IMI‡	3138	+36	1.1	25.2
7000	3480	Judges Sci.♦	4000	-50	2.9	48.4
90	34	LPA♦	77½		...	-29.4
685	409⅞	Melrose‡	511	+¾	1.5	17.6
261	179¾	Morgan Advanced	241	+6	5.1	32.1
405	200	Mpac♦	337½	+5	...	-10.6
1800	1120	MS Intl♦‡	1690		1.5	25.1
3318	1682	Oxford Instruments	2820	+14	0.8	33.3
2413⅜	1779⅛	Phillips Elec	1983½	-21⅛	3.7	-46.3
4⅛	1	PipeHawk♦	1⅞		...	-2.7
5490	3110	Renishaw	5110	+50	1.5	44.4
1586	990	Rolls-Royce‡	1543	+13	0.7	22.2
489¼	286⅜	Rotork‡	485		1.7	35.1
105	60	SDI Group♦	90	-1	...	19.1
318⅛	161	Senior	294		0.7	-288.2
2140⅝	2093⅞	SKF Group	2130½		2.8	32.0
2754⅛	2088	Smiths	2627	+10	1.8	30.7
215	135	Solid State♦	188½	-1	1.5	26.2
250	170	Somero Enter♦	240		3.1	17.2
8050	5950	Spirax Group	7205	+45	2.4	32.5
7½	3½	Tanfield♦	3⅞	-⅝	...	-3.8
320	240	Thorpe FW♦	262½	+7½	2.7	12.1
142¾	46	Transense Tech♦	46½		...	5.0
507½	350	Vesuvius	392¾	+2¾	6.0	18.6
710	325	Volex‡	619	+5	0.8	23.9
3580	2254	Weir	2900	-10	1.5	30.3
2060	843	XP Power	1802	-10	...	-42.9

Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
284½	187	Advanced Medical♦	281	-½	1.0	60.8
12⅛	5	Allergy Therapeutics♦	5⅝		...	-6.7
8	0⅞	CelLBxHealth♦	1¼		...	-0.2
580	391⅛	Anpario♦	520		2.4	12.9
15732	9892	AstraZeneca‡	12234	-242	2.0	25.2
3½	1⅝	Cambridge Nutri Sci♦	1⅞		...	2.7
259¼	193	Convatec‡	227⅝	-1¼	2.5	36.0
34	20	Potter & Moore♦‡	22½	+½	2.4	7.4
116⅞	72	Eco Animal Health♦	99		...	30.4
32	21¾	EKF Diagnostics♦	25	+¼	...	53.2
10½	0¼	Futura Medical♦	0⅜		...	-0.1
3228¾	1943	Genus	2300	+2	1.4	78.5
2282	1440¼	GSK‡	1899½	-6	3.7	13.5
0¼	0⅛	Gunsynd♦	0⅛		...	-2.1
416⅛	274⅜	Haleon‡	373¼	+3¾	2.0	20.1
1865	1187	Hikma Pharma‡	1640		3.9	12.2
266	150½	Hutchmed China♦	183	+4	...	4.7
19⅜	1½	ImmuPharma♦	3¾	+⅜	...	-10.1
32	12¼	Inspiration Health♦	18½	+¼	...	-15.9
15	6¼	IXICO♦	7¾		...	-4.2
1	0⅜	Thalia Therapeutics♦	0⅝		...	-3.9
77⅝	53⅞	NIOX Group♦	68⅝	+2	2.3	40.6
131.50	96.03	Novartis	CHF 127.18	-1.16	2.9	42.0
962	441½	Oxford Biomedica	515		...	-19.1
0¾	0¼	Physiomics♦	0½		...	-3.0
4⅜	1¼	Proteome Sciences♦	1⅝		...	-1.5
6522⅞	3664	Reckitt Benck‡	5158	+8	4.2	11.0
29⅞	10⅜	RUA Life Sci♦	28½	+½	...	-122.3
40	9½	Sareum Holdings♦	37		...	-15.4
1441½	1046	Smith & Neph	1071	+3	2.7	20.2
256½	140¾	Spire Healthcare	236	-1	0.6	57.6
14	5	Talisman Metals♦	7		...	2.0
0⅞	0⅛	ValiRx♦	0⅛		...	-0.3

Industrials

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
79⅞	58⅛	Accsys Tech♦	70¾	-1⅛	...	30.9
4780½	3665⅛	BASF	4447⅞	+50	4.3	28.5
4606¾	2268½	Bayer	4214⅜	+5⅝	0.2	-13.4
98⅛	73⅛	Coats Group	81¾	+⅞	3.0	18.8
3520¼	2437	Croda	3465	+8	3.2	78.0
490	230	Cropper (James)♦	480	+35	...	15.6
195⅜	136	Elementis‡	179⅝	+1¼	1.9	-31.3
110	6¼	Hardide♦	95	-1½	...	...
3775	2095	International Paper‡	3045	+70	4.5	-7.7
3245¼	2224	Johnson Matthey‡	2266	+28	4.5	-29.7
1078½	660	Mondi‡	864¾	+10¾	1.4	27.0
169⅞	110	Robinson♦	127½		4.7	9.4
992⅜	597	Swire Pacific	979¼	-4¼	3.8	48.1
11	5½	Symphony Enviro♦	7½		...	-6.9
124	16¾	Synthomer	98⅝	-⅜	...	-1.0
2858¼	2026⅝	Takeda Pharma	2705½	+28⅛	3.5	-60.6
841	515	Victrex	830	+1	7.2	25.9
430	320	Wynnstay♦	375		4.8	38.0
479⅞	318½	Zotefoams	438	+3	1.8	9.4

Leisure

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
451	231	Accesso Tech♦	301	+3½	...	14.6
260	160	Celtic♦	187½	-11½	...	5.2
221⅝	164	Domino's Pizza‡	211¾	+5¼	5.4	14.0
915⅝	500⅜	Entain‡	530⅜	-9⅝	3.8	-5.1
61	19¾	Evoke	45⅛	+¼	...	-0.4
52	29	Gaming Realms♦	30⅛	-¼	...	14.8
310	210	Heavitree♦	300		2.2	5.5
244	130	Heavitree A♦	195		3.4	3.6
175.70	115.99	InterCont'l Hotels‡	$164.00	+1.05	1.2	33.4
301½	223½	Mitch & Butlers	287½	+2½	...	9.7
297	129⅜	On The Beach	193⅜	+1¾	2.1	35.2
144⅜	86	Rank Group	106¾	-1¾	3.3	16.7
219⅜	137¼	SSP	202¾	+1¼	2.2	-21.8
0⅝	0¼	Bow Street Group♦	0⅜		...	-0.3
865	530½	Wetherspoon JD	850	-4½	1.4	14.2
3302	2098	Whitbread	2493	+18	3.9	20.2

Media

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
76⅛	51⅛	Aeorema Comms♦	64½		4.1	51.2
29	18	Altitude Group♦	23		...	-92.0
115	70¼	Arcontech Group♦	79½		5.0	11.3
828¾	418⅝	Autotrader	539¼	-10	2.2	15.8
690	435	Bloomsbury Pub	647	-9	2.5	19.5
3½		Caledonian Hldgs♦	1¼		...	-0.1
60	40	Catalyst Media♦	42½		...	23.1
0⅝	0⅛	Catenai♦	0⅛		...	-2.6
20¼	9	Ebiquity♦	9¼		...	-0.9
785	262¼	Future	307¼	-1¾	5.5	4.9
154	60⅝	GlobalData	84	+1⅛	1.8	19.1
110	44	IG Design Group♦	98	-½	1.0	-0.8
1000	719	Informa‡	893⅝	-5	2.5	...
87⅜	65¾	ITV	72	-¾	6.9	12.2
208	98½	ME Group	126	+¼	6.7	8.4
0⅛	0⅛	Mediazest♦	0⅛		...	13.8
27	12	Mission Group♦	21		...	-1.0
220¼	139¾	Mony Group‡	206¾	-2	6.1	13.5
2341⅜	1624⅜	News Corp A	2270¼	+20¾	0.6	...
2607⅜	1891½	News Corp B	2576¼	+33¼	0.6	...
439½	217	Next 15 Group♦	310	-5	5.0	-10.3
1337	874¾	Pearson‡	1217½	+3	2.1	23.7
4½	3	Primorus Inv♦	3⅜		...	5.0
74	40⅛	Reach‡	43		13.7	-1.0
59	40	React♦	42½		...	-29.3
3575	1991	Relx‡	2586	-32	2.7	23.0
775⅜	391⅜	Rightmove	509	-5⅝	2.1	18.1
270	130	SpaceandPeople♦	135		...	6.2
130	95⅝	STV Group	109	+3½	...	-10.1
447	170½	System1 Group♦	335		1.8	32.2
5118⅞	5118⅞	21st Cent Fox A	5118⅞		0.8	...
3359½	3308	21st Cent Fox B	3359½		1.3	...
369	230	Wilmington	270		4.3	21.0
412⅝	218½	WPP	381¼	-10⅞	3.9	7.6
71½	40	Zinc Media♦	56½		...	-5.5

Natural Resources

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0⅛	0	ADM Energy‡	0		...	1.2
17⅞	8⅛	H-Power♦	10½	-⅜	...	-4.3
89⅜	36¾	Afentra♦	74	-1⅜	...	-71.8
0	0	Arkadian Strat Metals♦	0		...	-0.9
0¼	0⅛	Alien Metals♦	0⅛		...	-15.2
2⅞	0⅞	Aminex	1⅛		...	-12.7
8924	3349⅞	Anglo Amer Plat	6435⅜	+143	7.2	23.8
4280	2185	Anglo Amer‡	4220	+17	0.7	-17.3
435	160	Anglo Asian Mng♦‡	420	+19	0.7	36.8
4475	2115	Antofagasta	4024	+15	1.4	40.6
1¼	0⅜	Arc Minerals♦	0¾		...	-1.5
2⅜	1¼	Ariana Resources♦	1⅝	+⅛	...	-168.0
0⅞	0¼	Arkle Resources♦	0¾		...	-10.6
2¼	0⅞	Asiamet Resources♦	1⅝		...	-14.0
1094	508	Atalaya Mine	1057	+27	1.0	20.3
4¾	2½	Beacon Energy♦	3⅛		...	-0.7
13	4	Beowulf Mining♦	10½		...	-3.1

PRICES

Major indices

New York	
Dow Jones	53,463.88 (-113.52)
Nasdaq	26,130.20 (-21.10)
S&P 500	7,675.70 (-1.58)
Tokyo	
Nikkei 225	66262.16 (+405.73)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	25652.97 (+141.87)
Amsterdam	
Amsterdam AEX	1107.76 (-0.58)
Sydney	
Australia AO	9338.80 (-36.10)
Frankfurt	
DAX	26285.96 (+19.82)
Singapore	
Singapore Straits	5721.59 (-14.09)
Brussels	
Brussels BEL20	5860.95 (+26.42)
Paris	
Paris CAC	8462.39 (+23.19)
Zurich	
Zurich SMI	14542.90 (+17.61)
Zurich DJ Euro Stoxx 50	6470.74 (+15.11)
London	
FTSE100	10878.12 (-8.04)
FTSE250	24897.84 (+41.79)
FTSE350	5931.63 (-2.82)
FTSE Eurotop 100	5073.84 (-1.05)
FTSE All Share	5866.59 (-2.70)
FTSE Non Financials	6443.74 (-10.81)
TechMark Focus	9505.67 (-41.65)
US$	1.3588 (-0.0045)
Euro	1.1668 (-0.0014)
SDR	0.9909 (-0.0023)
CPI Jul (2015=100)	142.9
RPI Jul (1987=100)	419.1
RPIX Jul (1987=100)	412.2

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London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	26-Sep	87.13	87.13	86.55	86.66	117967	103320
	26-Dec	86.95	87.06	86.49	86.61	279336	1263523
	27-Mar				86.59	0	
3-Mth Sonia Index	26-Jun	96.2525	96.255	96.2525	96.255	1875	388250
	26-Sep	96.175	96.18	96.165	96.175	64764	440719
	26-Dec	95.965	95.97	95.945	95.95	93082	583775
	27-Mar	95.81	95.815	95.77	95.78	63476	399964
3 Mth Sonia Index	27-Jun	95.74	95.74	95.68	95.695	77488	384440
	27-Sep	95.735	95.735	95.665	95.68	55443	252472
	27-Dec	95.76	95.76	95.68	95.7	68857	298017
3-Mth Euribor	26-Sep	97.4	97.4	97.38	97.385	122629	636823
	26-Dec	97.265	97.265	97.21	97.215	164196	946628
	27-Mar	97.17	97.17	97.095	97.1	123700	470133
	27-Jun	97.125	97.125	97.04	97.045	162982	499432
	27-Sep	97.125	97.125	97.03	97.04	117246	445520
3-Mth Saron Index	26-Jun	100.05	100.05	100.0475	100.0475	678	68831
	26-Sep	100.05	100.055	100.045	100.05	9390	65856
	26-Dec	100.025	100.03	100.015	100.015	11785	54475
	27-Mar	99.97	99.98	99.955	99.955	7358	40878
	27-Jun	99.9	99.91	99.87	99.88	5772	30185
	27-Sep	99.82	99.83	99.79	99.8	2905	27021
	27-Dec	99.745	99.755	99.72	99.725	1511	21608
FTSE100	26-Sep	10916	10951.5	10882.5	10914	51981	477516
	26-Dec	10998	10998	10998	10981.5	20	1464
FTSEurofirst 80	26-Sep				8794.2	0	
	26-Dec				8840	0	

Tradeweb

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Commodities

Natural Gas $

2.861	+0.09

Light Crude Oil

82.25	+0.02

Crude Oils ($/barrel FOB)

WTI NOV 26	80.97	0
WTI DEC 26	79.36	0.12
WTI JAN 27	77.95	0.25
WTI FEB 27	76.68	0.33
WTI MAR 27	75.63	0.34

Products

Fuel Oil	493.15	-3.905
Euro Naphtha CIF NWE	743.742	-4.73

ICE Futures

Gas Oil

Sep1238.75-1238.25	Jan1070.25-1069.5
Oct1199.5-1199	Feb1042.75-1042.25
Nov1150.25-1149.75	
Dec1104-1103.5	Volume: 209392

Brent

Oct88.7-88.68	Jan83.54-83.52
Nov87.22-87.21	Feb82.15-82.13
Dec85.27-85.25	Volume: 699613

Cocoa

Sep4146 +5	Sep4308 +18
Dec4236 +30	Dec4242 +20
Mar4356 +37	Mar4356 +37
May4360 +38	May4360 +38
Jul4352 +30	Volume: 41705

Robusta Coffee

Sep3588 -65	May3565 -76
Nov3614 -78	Jul3547 -79
Jan3601 -79	
May3565 -76	Volume: 30897

White Sugar

Oct509.4 -8.6	Aug506.7 -1.1
Dec508.8 -6.7	Oct504.1 -0.4
May510.3 -2.3	
May510.3 -2.3	Volume: 56749

London Grain Futures

LIFFE Wheat (close £/t)

Nov207.75 +2	May213.75 +1.75
Jan 208	Jul 214
Mar 210	Volume: 10975

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0⅛	0	Bezant Resources♦	0⅛		...	11.3
3589	1918	BHP Group	3535	-37	3.6	24.8
14	7⅝	Border & Sthn Pet♦	11⅝	+¾	...	-98.5
122½	7⅞	Bougainville	8½	-¾	...	-12.7
609⅜	399⅜	**BP**‡	522¾	-5⅞	4.7	...
0	0	Buccaneer Energy♦	0		...	-0.6
8¼	1¾	Cadence Minerals♦	5¾		...	-10.9
5½	3	Cadogan Energy	3¾		...	-11.3
2900	1250	Caledonia Mining♦‡	1850		2.3	8.9
3⅜	1¾	Caspian Sunrise#	1⅞		...	3.5
244	125¼	Cent Asia Metals♦	181¾	+14¼	8.5	-5.8
2¼	1⅛	Chariot Ltd♦	1⅝		...	...
0	0	Clontarf Energy♦	0		...	-6.2
0½	0¼	Corcel♦	0⅜		...	-2.5
18½	8	Crism Therapeutics♦	11½		...	-2.3
300½	129½	DRD Gold	221	-5⅛	3.5	18.4
0½	0⅛	ECR Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-2.8
0⅛	0	Empyrean Energy♦	0		...	-0.4
5620	2472	**Endeavour**	4746	-47	2.8	23.0
28	9¾	EnQuest	24⅝	-¾	3.3	...
6	2	Eurasia Mining♦	2¼		...	14.7
2⅜	0⅝	Europa Oil & Gas♦	1¾	-⅛	...	-9.0
87¼	27¼	Ferrexpo#	28⅝		...	-4.6
4472	1693	**Fresnillo**‡	3126	-50	3.6	22.6
80	3	Galantas Gold♦	32½	+1½	...	-8.8
21½	2⅞	GCM Resources♦	14¼	-2¾	...	-20.3
7¼	2½	Gem Diamonds	4¼		...	-0.1
3½	1⅝	Getech♦	3¼		...	-7.9
707¼	281⅞	**Glencore**	598¾	-3¾	2.1	...
0½	0⅛	Geo Exploration#	0⅛		...	-4.3
4582¾	2310¼	Gold Fields	3561¾	+41	4.5	...
21	6½	Goldplat♦	19	+½	3.5	31.7
2	0⅜	Goldstone Res♦	0⅝		...	-0.8
800	255	Greatland Resources♦	706	-8	...	21.1
353¾	176	Griffin Mining♦	286	+1	...	32.1
235	160⅝	Gulf Keystone	196¼	+1	3.9	38.3
858	246¼	Hochschild	659	+33½	1.0	23.0
553	300	Hunting	400	+6	2.5	20.7
0⅛	0	Ironveld♦	0		...	-2.5
219¾	57⅞	ITM Power♦	105⅞	-1¼	...	-14.3
5¼	2¼	Jubilee Metals♦	2½		...	-3.4
1⅛	0⅜	Karel Diamond Res♦	0⅝		...	-3.9
2⅛	0⅝	KEFI Gold and Copper♦	1¼		...	-10.9
330	178⅜	Kenmare Res	197	-7	...	-0.7
5⅞	1¾	Landore Res♦	2		...	-2.0
0⅛	0⅛	Lansdowne Resources♦	0⅛		...	-1.3
4⅞	2⅝	Lexington Gold♦	2¾		...	-28.2
19¼	10¼	Metals Exploration♦	15⅞		...	20.6
0¾	0⅛	Nativo Resources♦	0¼		...	-0.1
4½	0½	Nostrum Oil & Gas	0¾		...	-0.0
0⅝	0¼	Oriole Resources♦	0⅜		...	-17.1
		Ormonde Mining			...	...
41	12	Orosur Mining♦	16¼		...	...
190⅜	60½	Pan African Res	136¼	-1¾	1.6	25.9
33⅛	6¾	Pantheon Res♦	12	-1½	...	-43.1
27	12½	Parkmead Group♦	22½		...	3.3
21⅞	5	Petra Diamonds	5½	-¼	...	-0.2
1⅛	0½	Petrel Resources♦	0⅞		...	-4.0
1⅝	0⅝	Petro Matad♦	1		...	-4.6
8½	2¾	Plexus Holdings♦	3¾		...	-1.4
938	672	Porvair	868	+8	0.8	22.1
5⅛	2⅛	Prospex Energy♦	3¾	+⅛	...	-5.7
5	0⅞	Quadrise♦	1		...	-5.9
160	35	Reabold Resources♦	61	-⅜	...	-762.5
0	0	Red Rock Res♦	0		...	-0.3
10416¼	5502⅞	Rio Tinto Ltd‡	9472⅜	+61⅛	3.6	18.1
9117	4528	**Rio Tinto**‡	7722	-8	4.4	17.1
0½	0⅛	Rome Resources♦	0¼		...	-14.2
375	194	Serabi Gold♦	325		1.5	6.2
302⅜	146	Serica Energy♦	250	-7⅝	6.4	-26.1
3758½	2553¾	**Shell**‡	3371	-15½	4.5	15.1
7	2¼	Shuka Minerals♦	3¼	+⅛	...	-2.4
13	1½	Sound Energy♦	1¾	-⅛	...	-1.5
27	5½	Star Energy♦	21½	-½	...	-3.8
4½	0⅞	Sunda Energy♦	2¼		...	-2.2
0	0	Sunrise Resources♦	0		...	-3.3
0		Synergia Energy♦	0		...	0.5
0⅛	0	Tertiary Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-7.2
0⅞	0½	Thor Energy♦	0⅝		...	-0.6
7066	4293½	Total Eng SE	6451½	-28	4.6	12.7
0	0	Tower Resources♦	0		...	-0.3
21¼	3½	Tullow Oil	19	-1⅝	...	64.5
0	0	UK Oil & Gas♦	0		...	-0.2
13	2⅝	URU Metals♦	4	+⅛	...	-2.8
9½	2⅛	Vast Resources♦	4¼		...	-0.7
9	1⅜	Westmount Energy♦	3¼		...	-8.6
1½	0½	Xtract Resources♦	1	-¼	...	-4.3
4⅜	2¼	Zephyr Energy♦	3		...	-7.0

Professional & Support Services

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
5135	2980	4imprint‡	4594	+92	3.9	15.4
615	464	Andrews Sykes♦	597½		4.3	13.8
130	103½	BTG Consulting♦	111	-1½	4.1	20.9
2886	1981	**Bunzl**	2786	-8	2.7	19.8
416	215	Capita	282	-6½	...	-2.0
49⅞	25	CEPS♦	40½	+½	...	-11.5
165	90	Christie Group♦	152½		2.3	30.0
2581⅛	2000	**Compass**	2213⅜	-45½	2.3	27.3
87	64½	Croma Security♦	70		3.4	12.2
6740	4188	**DCC Energy**	6370	+10	3.4	...
36	15	Diales Grp♦	35½	+1	4.2	27.3
7765	4970	**Diploma**	7355	+125	0.9	53.3
840	505	DiscoverIE	801	+20	1.6	26.5
115¼	78⅜	Essentra	110¼	+⅜	1.9	...
3987	2203	**Experian**	2967	-42	1.7	24.5
330	110	FIH Group♦	185		3.6	-4.5
850	588	Hargreaves Servs♦	830	+2	4.8	8.9
5860	3519⅜	**Intertek**	5845	-5	2.8	26.8
250¾	163½	Int'l Workplace	182½	+2¼	0.6	...
172⅛	123¾	Johnson Service	146¼	+⅝	3.3	15.7
554	360	Journeo♦	505		...	20.8
263⅝	178⅝	Kier Group	260⅜	+⅜	3.0	20.3
1170	910	Latham (J)♦	1070	-5	3.4	11.6
3800	2100	London Security♦	3650		2.7	18.8
298	204	LSL Property Servs	271	+3	4.2	16.3
99	59¾	Macfarlane	74⅜	-½	4.9	18.6
188⅞	64½	Maintel Holdings♦	68½		...	-5.8
28	15¼	Malvern Intl♦	21½		...	-2.8
460	310	Mears Group	430½	+5½	4.2	7.7
260	101¼	Michael Page	222⅜	-⅝	2.1	76.7
214	134¾	Mitie Group‡	209	+⅜	2.2	31.7
15¾	0¾	MobilityOne#	6¾		...	-2.1
137	71⅛	Newmark Security♦	106½		...	15.1
260	170	Norman Broadbent♦	201		...	6.3
158	84⅞	Northern Bear♦	132½	-1½	5.7	4.4
187½	110	NWF Group♦	153½	+2½	5.7	8.3
66	42	PCI-PAL♦	62½		...	...
12½	7	Petards♦	10		...	-14.9
12⅞	7	PHSC♦	7¾		...	-2.6
0⅝	0⅛	PowerHouse Energy♦	0¼		...	-3.0
62⅝	41⅜	Record	43¾	-⅛	8.2	11.2
978	772	Renew Holdings♦	961	-5	2.1	15.6
507	329⅝	**Rentokil**‡	345⅛	-2⅝	2.7	25.2
310	222	Restore♦	297	+3	2.5	-63.2
7	1½	River Global A♦‡	2½		...	-0.3
30	14	Roebuck Food Group♦	26		...	-9.0
756	536⅞	RS Group	754	+10½	3.0	21.8
150	85	RTC Group♦	95		7.1	6.7
125⅝	68	RWS Holdings♦	119½	-1⅝	5.3	-4.4
612	520	Science Group♦	578		1.7	7.7
325¼	212¾	Serco	260¾	+¾	1.8	18.1
79⅜	54¼	Smiths News	69	-¼	8.0	5.9
27¾	13¼	Software Circel♦	15¾	+¼	...	-75.2
52½	36⅝	Staffline Group♦	42⅜	+¼	...	10.9
300½	132¼	SThree	294½	-3½	4.9	21.5
350	146	Synectics♦	197½	+2½	2.5	9.0
2	0½	Thruvision Group♦	1¼		...	-1.2
74	46	Tribal♦	61	+⅝	2.1	14.5
81	58	Vianet♦	66		3.6	46.2
490	294½	ZIGUP	461½	-3½	5.9	13.7

Retailing

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
117⅞	82½	AO World	94	+¼	...	14.8
269¼	140	B&M European	245¾	-1	3.9	15.1
115¾	58¼	Card Factory	76½	+¼	6.5	8.5
1648	1062	CVS Group	1299	+3	0.7	17.6
204	113	DFS Furniture	164	+6	0.6	15.6
1248	707	Dunelm	891½	+2½	7.9	11.5
843½	598	Frasers Group	835	+7½	...	9.6
2046	1407¼	Greggs	1872	-10	3.7	15.6
250	123¾	Halfords‡	241	+2½	3.7	15.9
981	713	**Howden Joinery**	820	+19½	2.7	16.7
895	640½	Inchcape‡	838	+17½	4.0	11.6
1⅜	0⅜	Imaging Biometrics	0¾	+⅛	...	-4.1
106⅛	64	**JD Sports**	87⅞	+2½	1.4	10.2
372¼	240¼	**Kingfisher**	322¾	+¼	3.8	23.1
418⅛	301⅛	**Marks & Spencer**	394¼	+3⅛	1.1	31.0
3⅞	0⅝	Mothercare♦	0¾		...	-0.8
93¼	61¾	Naked Wines♦	66⅝	-2¼	...	-7.2
15900	11200	**Next**	15655	+20	1.7	20.6
358¾	140¼	Ocado	249¾	+3	...	5.3
240¾	167¼	Pets at Home	216	-⅝	3.4	15.7
575	200	Pinewood Tech Group	450		...	93.8
747	192¾	Saga	688	+9	...	...
380¼	292¼	**Sainsbury's**	333⅝	-1½	4.1	19.3
719½	378⅝	WH Smith	420¾	+5¾	...	-3.8
14	4½	Sosandar♦	13¼	+¼	...	94.6
510⅜	411¾	**Tesco**	460⅜	-4¼	3.1	16.7
50	30¼	Topps Tiles	34¾	-¼	8.9	11.4

Technology

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
252	140⅜	Alfa Financial	163¼	-4⅜	5.9	16.0
307	195	Aptitude Software	216	+2	2.5	29.6
129	55	Bango♦	63	+½	...	-8.7
20	11¾	BATM Adv Coms	11¾	-½	...	-3.8
33	19⅞	Berkeley Res	26¼	+¼	...	-68.1
3¼	0⅞	Blackbird♦	1⅛		...	-1.9
194	74	Celebrus Tech♦	96½		3.5	-108.4
28	12½	Cirata♦	12⅞	-⅛	...	-2.9
0⅜	0⅛	CloudCoCo♦	0⅛		...	0.5
5250	2234	**Computacenter**	5215	+25	1.4	35.6
286	173½	Concurrent Tech♦	252½	+22½	0.5	43.1
13½	6½	Corero♦	7¼		...	-98.5
2644	988	Craneware♦	1264	-8	2.7	30.6
110	50	Crimson Tide♦	87½		...	20.8
10	5¾	CyanConnode Hldgs♦	9⅞		...	-8.4
15½	8	Dillistone Group♦	12		...	-8.2
0½	0	Forgent♦	0		...	-0.0
165¾	94½	FDM Group	111¾	-2¾	6.3	21.5
480	114	Filtronic♦	235	-7	...	...
265	151⅜	GB Group	154⅝	-¼	2.8	-5.0
51	24	Ilika♦	26½	-½	...	-6.6
138	56	Ingenta♦	65½		6.9	5.5
178	73	Intercede♦	111	-1	...	19.5
28½	11⅛	Iomart♦	15¼	+⅛	...	-1.9
72⅞	4⅝	IQE♦	47	-½	...	-12.5
4453½	912⅝	LG Electronics	1810⅜	-23⅜	1.4	...
79	37	MTI Wireless♦	66		3.1	15.3
13½	2	Nanoco Group	2½		...	-2.2
138	94⅛	Netcall♦	116½		0.8	47.6
36	22	Northamber♦	25		2.4	-1.7
60⅜	37½	Oxford Metrics♦	39⅜	+⅜	8.2	-71.6
31	17	Pennant Intl♦	29½	-½	...	-5.9
447	210	Playtech	399¾	-4¾	...	1.0
50	24	Pulsar Group♦	24½		...	-3.1
576½	398½	QinetiQ	518	-8	2.1	25.8
117	88	RM	103½	+2½	...	39.8
6½	2⅜	Seeing Machines♦	4½	-⅛	...	-11.1
66	35½	Shearwater Group♦	58½		...	-1.5
2084	1083	Softcat	2044	-38	1.5	30.7
39½	5	Sorted Group#	9		...	-0.2
1018½	575½	Tele Ericsson	741	-12⅛	3.1	11.3
1181	771⅝	**The Sage Grp**	1063	-41½	2.1	28.2
89½	52½	Touchstar♦	85		3.8	-6.4
435	280	Tracsis♦	340	+5	0.8	...
430	236	Triad Group‡	410		2.2	41.3
360	210	Water Intel♦	345	+10	...	16.3
150	96⅜	Xaar	116	+3	...	-27.0
19	8½	Zoo Digital♦	18	+½	...	-6.4

Telecoms

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
436¼	212¾	**Airtel Africa**	339⅝	+5	1.5	24.8
242⅛	173	**BT Group**‡	205	-1⅝	4.1	18.6
169½	106	Currys	148¾	+1	2.0	9.6
1186	687	Gamma Comms	1127	+7	2.0	16.2
247⅝	127⅝	Helios Towers‡	203	-1¼	0.9	74.6
0⅜	0⅛	Gana Media♦	0⅛		...	-3.0
1914	638	Telecom Plus‡	860		5.8	8.5
131⅛	83⅜	**Vodafone**	117⅞	-⅜	3.4	-83.4

Transport

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
260	203⅛	Braemar‡	221	-4	3.2	30.5
5485	3365	Clarkson	4990	-2	2.3	23.3
683¾	332⅝	EasyJet	673¼	-2¾	2.0	10.2
227¾	152⅛	FirstGroup	179⅝	+⅞	4.0	8.4
554	325	Fisher (James)	441	-12	...	-50.7
492⅞	332¾	**Intl Cons Air**	442¼	+¼	1.5	7.2
699⅝	458	Irish Cont	627½	+5	...	15.7
35¾	17	Mobico Group	24¼	+⅜	...	-1.1
7	1⅝	Sutton Harbour♦	4¼		...	-0.4
1453	832	Wizz Air	1122	+37	...	...

Utilities

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
220¼	151½	**Centrica**‡	154¾	-¾	3.7	-103.2
937½	613⅞	Drax Group	756½	-½	4.0	36.5
485	420	Jersey Electricity	435		5.0	12.1
1428½	1000	**National Grid**	1182½	-3	4.1	18.1
606	439⅜	Pennon‡	475	+2	6.2	24.5
3335	2381	**Severn Trent**	3150	-2	4.0	25.5
2767½	1597	**SSE**‡	2416	+7	2.8	22.9
1497	1072	**United Utilities**	1436		3.7	16.7

INVESTMENT COMPANIES

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
4497	1825	**3i Group**	2844	-60	3.0	5.3
399½	325	3i Infrastructure	393½	-2½	3.4	12.3
1782	1408⅛	Aberforth Smlr‡	1774	+2	2.7	27.7
1394	1178	**Alliance Witan**	1382	+8	2.1	74.7
404	321	Artemis UK Future Lead	396	-2	3.9	32.0
210	116⅜	Athelney Trust	165		6.1	14.5
273	235⅛	AVI Global	263½	-½	1.7	52.0
194	154½	AVI Japan	172	-1½	1.3	58.5
331	277	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	308½	+2½	0.8	...
133	91⅜	Baillie Gifford Eur Gr	126½	+1	0.6	...
1090	811⅛	Baillie Gifford Jpn	1068	+4	0.9	...
176	123	Baillie Gifford SN	171¾	+2¼	0.4	...
231	180½	Baillie Gifford UK Gr‡	228	+2	2.7	36.6
154¾	121¾	Bankers Invstmt Tst‡	150¼	+1	1.9	66.8
445	387¾	BH Macro GBP	423½	-1	...	20.0
1784	866	Biotech Growth	1746	-2	...	-918.9
289½	201	BlckRck Amer Inc‡	282	+2	5.3	99.6
205	123	BlckRck Eng&Res Inc	186½		3.1	53.3
208	164½	BlckRck Fro Inv	192	+1	4.0	25.7
625	507	BlackRock Grt Euro	611	+3	1.2	88.7
240	200	BlckRck Inc&Grth‡	234		3.3	32.4
288⅜	230¾	BlckRck Smlr‡	278½	+2½	2.8	31.8
1072⅞	562	BlckRck Wld Min	1042	+2	2.3	43.3
1665	1280	Brown Adv US Sm	1580		...	-263.8
1584	1336	Brunner‡	1574	+8	1.7	56.5
402	312	Caledonia Inv	395	+4	1.9	51.3
599	486	City of Lon IT‡	593	+1	3.7	27.5
155⅜	80⅝	Crystal Amber Fd	82½	-½	-59.8	...
592	439⅞	CT Priv Eq Ord	480	-5	5.9	...
373	320	CT UK Cap & Inc	361		3.7	29.8
120	92	CT UK HIT B	109		5.5	22.5
126	97	CT UK HIT	119		5.0	24.5
480¼	460	Dunedin Ent#	475		...	...
867	737⅝	Edinburgh IT	863	-1	3.7	32.4
294½	188¼	Edin Wwide	262½	-1	...	-236.5
1332	325¾	**F&C Inv Trust**	343⅜	+1¾	1.2	76.4
672	546	Fidlty Asian Val	624	+4	3.3	27.7
339	241	Fidelity China Sp	263	+1	3.4	28.5
1574	836	FdityEmrgMkt	1500	+10	1.3	65.8
447½	367½	Fidelity European Trust	441	+2	2.2	39.0
478	372	Fidlty Spec Val	476½	+1	2.2	38.8
906	706¼	Fins Gwth & Inc	829	-7	2.4	43.9
85⅝	69¾	GCP Infrastructure‡	82⅝	+⅞	8.5	38.4
370	316	Global Opps Tst	339½	+1	3.0	43.5
117	113½	Golden Prospect‡	114¾		-17.1	...
68⅞	57⅛	Greencoat Renew‡	68¼	+⅜	-16.9	...
117	92¼	Greencoat UK Wind‡	110¼	-⅛	9.7	-12.7
346	250	Hansa Investment Co	338	+6	1.3	76.8
335	244	Hansa Inv Co A	330	+5	1.3	75.0
3500	2745	Hbrvest Glbl Pt Eq	3350	+5	...	-56.9
214	173¼	Hend High Inc	207	-2	5.4	18.4
998	769	Hend Smlr	979	-1	3.0	37.5
3290¾	2285	Herald Inv Trust	2950	-20	...	...
514⅝	318⅝	HgCapital Trust	425		1.2	...
141	107¼	HICL Infra	139⅜	-⅝	6.1	10.1
1611⅜	1288¼	ICG Ent Tr‡	1480	+14	2.8	-416.9
494¾	379	Impax Env Mkts	445	+2	1.1	90.1
519	368⅜	Invesco Asia Dragon Tr	497	+2½	3.9	50.6
178½	150⅛	Invesco Bond Inc	171½	+½	7.1	13.1
427	318	Invesco Glbl Eq Inc	415	-1	3.9	82.8
1258	1041	JPM American	1210		1.0	...
652	398	JPM Asia Gro & Inc	584		5.3	...
313	259½	JPM China‡	271	+1	5.0	69.7
986	791¾	JPM Claverhs‡	984	+4	3.7	29.2
310	181⅝	JPM Emrg EMEA Sec	239½	-6½	0.3	...
181¼	118⅜	JPM Em Mkts	166⅝	+⅜	4.5	72.4
666	548	JPMorgan Euro	640	+5	2.5	35.2
221	148	JPM Em Mkts Div Inc	209		2.9	36.7
641	529⅝	JPM GG&I	621½	+3	4.0	75.2
1098	799	JPM India‡	874	-2	5.1	...
867	661	JPM Japan	812	+2	1.1	80.0
463	365	JPM Smllr Co	436	+4	0.7	...
1290	977⅜	Law Debenture	1256	+4	2.9	33.7
191½	145½	Lowland Inv	187½	+½	3.6	27.9
137¾	137¾	Marwyn Val Inv‡	138½		15.3	...
289½	234¼	Mercantile IT	288½	+1½	2.9	31.2
691	536	Merchants Trust	688	+2	4.3	22.5
804	682	Mid Wynd	792	+2	1.1	...
1664	1366	Monks Inv Trust‡	1624	+12	0.1	...
189	142	Montanaro Eur Sml‡	177½	-½	0.9	91.5
1036	854⅝	Murray Income Trust‡	1002		4.1	26.0
376	293	Murray Intl	375½	+1½	3.4	27.0
437	345	Pacific Assets Trust	427	+4	...	76.2
409	325	Pantheon Intl	393	-1½	...	...
5095	3636	**Pershing Sqr**‡	3924	+24	1.4	3.8
558	512	Personal Assets‡	553	-2	1.0	91.7
743½	385⅞	**Polar CapTech**	643	+5	...	-765.5
80½	63¼	Renewables Infra‡	76⅝		9.9	-14.2
2645	1932	RIT Cap Ptnr	2565	-10	1.8	...
990⅝	490	Riverstone	590		...	-369.5
738	488¾	Schroder TotRt	700		1.6	71.4
892	608	Schrd Asia Pac	836	+4	1.6	63.3
379	311⅞	Schrod Inc Gwth	379	+1	3.9	30.2
401	276	Schrod Jap Gwth	385	+1	3.1	55.7
782	652	Schrod UKMid	770	-4	2.9	30.8
17¾	12¾	Schroder UK PP Tr	17⅛	-⅛	...	-71.5
572	480½	Scot American‡	561	-1	2.9	35.8
1563	1015¾	**Scot Mortgage**	1467	-10½	0.3	...
88	75½	Sequoia Eco	84⅞	-¾	8.1	12.4
253	215⅞	STS Glbl Inc Grwth	232	+1½	3.6	35.7
352	198¼	Temp Emg Mkt	319½	+½	1.6	59.3
429½	334	Temple Bar‡	422	-½	3.7	30.6
198⅝	162¾	The Glbl Smaller‡	193⅝	+1⅜	1.6	65.6
9	0⅜	Potentially AI	6¼		-1.6	...
364½	291	TR Property	307	-2	5.2	19.4
204	188	UIL	196		19.3	...
302	243	Utilico Emerging Mkt	278	+1	3.5	20.5
865	682	Vietnam Ent Inv	733	+19	...	4.8
401½	320	Ww Health	394½	-1½	0.6	...

♦AIM company; # Price at suspension; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; * figures or report awaited; . . . No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by ICE Data Services.

Exchange rates

Australia $	1.89635 (-0.00841)
Canada $	1.88621 (-0.0018)
Denmark Kr	8.72102 (-0.01469)
Euro	1.1664 (-0.0024)
Hong Kong $	10.654 (-0.04)
Hungary	422.71 (+1.16)
Indonesia	24056.16 (-64.9)
Israel	4.0539 (-0.0022)
Japan Yen	216.621 (-0.6)
New Zealand $	2.28924 (+0.0065)
Norway Kr	12.71 (+0.0055)
Poland	5.0347 (+0.0147)
Russia	114.67 (+0.479)
S Africa	21.72298 (-0.01296)
Sweden Kr	12.9632 (+0.0624)
Switzerland Fr	1.0948 (+0.00195)
Turkey Lira	65.3981 (-0.2373)
USA $	1.3594 (-0.005)

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Gold/precious metals

(US dollars per ounce)

Bullion: Open $4657.378

Close $4603.43 **High** $4673.652

Low $4583.141

AM $4621.05 **PM** $4631.50

Platinum $1840.918

Silver $68.0522

Palladium $1327.56

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks: 3.75%
ECB Refi 2.40%
Fed Fund 3.5-3.75%
Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 7.24%

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.7210	8.7356	-136.65	-402.49
Euro	1.1664	1.1686	-14.26	-41.48
Montreal	1.8862	1.8877	-26.99	-80.45
New York	1.3594	1.3644	-0.29	-0.35
Oslo	12.7100	12.7064	46.16	162.34
Tokyo	216.6210	217.1750	-53.03	-157.06
Zurich	1.0948	1.0928	-37.25	-113.59

Other sterling

Argentine peso	2055.74976-2055.75171
Australian dollar	1.89635-1.89652
Bahrain dinar	0.51140-0.51340
Brazilian real	7.01520-7.01720
Euro	1.16640-1.16720
Hong Kong dollar	10.65400-10.65800
Indian rupee	129.60271-129.68269
Indonesian rupiah	24056.16016-24096.16016
Kuwaiti dinar	0.41880-0.42080
Malaysian ringgit	5.47170-5.47370
New Zealand dollar	2.28924-2.28962
Singaporean dollar	1.72869-1.72952
South African rand	21.72298-21.73415
UAE dirham	4.99170-4.99370

Dollar rates

Australia	1.39460-1.39540
Canada	1.38768-1.38775
Denmark	6.41584-6.41664
Euro	0.85810-0.85850
Hong Kong	7.83821-7.83886
Japan	159.36000-159.36200
Malaysia	4.02200-4.03100
Norway	9.35049-9.35373
Singapore	1.27196-1.27204
Sweden	9.53650-9.53969
Switzerland	0.80543-0.80548

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SNOWDEN

Deputy prime minister and friend of Putin
Sergei Ivanov
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Register

Obituaries

Tim Curry

Actor who played the transvestite Dr Frank-N-Furter in The Rocky Horror Show with an erotic villainy that inspired cult fandom

Come Halloween season, faithful fans of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* still flock to seamy cinemas to watch midnight showings of the 1975 cult classic, clad in fishnet stockings, six inch stiletto heels and garish makeup.

When a British man in a blue suit arrived at an early viewing of the musical horror comedy at The Waverly (now the IFC Center) in New York, and floated equivocally at the back, he was deemed an imposter and duly thrown out. Had they known that he was the actor who played Dr Frank-N-Furter — the film's self-proclaimed "sweet transvestite from Transsexual, Transylvania" whose erotic villainy inspired the film's cult-like fandom — they would have been given a fright greater than that of the newly engaged couple who are lured into Frank's castle.

The truth was that Curry was a languid and rather shy man with a deadpan humour, and it was a mark of his talent for mimicry that he was often cast as the eccentric villain: a leering and irascible Bill Sikes in a 1982 adaptation of *Oliver Twist* ("I really put my back into it," he said of murdering Nancy) or the clown Pennywise in a 1990 miniseries of Stephen King's *It*.

It was a role he often attributed to his appearance: his wide grin, broad features and heated stare. "It's a clown's face," he said, "and anyway, I've always been drawn to the left-handed parts, the exotic, the crazy."

Before it was adapted by the Australian director Jim Sharman into the cult 1975 film, *The Rocky Horror Show* was a camp musical by Richard O'Brien, which ran in London's West End from 1973 to 1980. Curry played Frank-N-Furter from the start, and even then there was a discrepancy between the man on-stage and off, a gap filled by Pierre Laroche, a make-up artist who had worked for David Bowie and Mick Jagger and had helped to create the androgynous glam rock aesthetic. For Frank-N-Furter's deep, rich drawl, Curry drew inspiration from a woman he had spotted one day on a bus in London, who was part of "a particular kind of social group, sort of Knightsbridge, who wear headscarves knotted under the chin".

'I've always been drawn to the left-handed parts, the exotic, the crazy'

The show was an instant hit, drawing audience members from Princess Margaret to Bowie, who made a point of applauding Curry showily every time he came on stage.

If Curry was self-conscious about playing an "evil transvestite" — his church-going mother was, he said, particularly unimpressed — he felt the risk was worth it. "I did think it was risky and indeed it was. But I like risky. I would choose risky over anything. That's the best way to be."

Curry was, at heart, the self-deprecating son of a Methodist naval chaplain and it was somewhat ironic that he became the beacon of a film that went on to influence the counterculture and sexual liberation movements that came after the 1960s. "The amazing thing about this guy is he comes on as a loony," said Leta Powell Drake, an American television personality, in an interview, "but he's a gentle man." Curry replied in his plummy English accent: "He's a crashing bore, in fact."

ALAMY

Curry as Dr Frank-N-Furter in The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975). He had originated the role on stage two years earlier

Timothy James Curry was born in 1946 in Grappenhall, Cheshire, to Jim and his wife Maura ("Pat") Curry, a school secretary. With his father's job, his early life was itinerant: every few years the family would move to another quaint British seaside town, settling in Plymouth when he was 11. When he wrote a memoir in 2025 it was titled *Vagabond*.

The family attended church every Sunday and Tim joined the choir aged six, singing soprano. His father, whom he described as a kind, Christian man, died of pneumonia when he was 12. "The next day I was 15 because I no longer saw the world as a safe place," he recalled. "I was instantly, emotionally, much older."

After his death Tim's mother became volatile, sometimes frightening — Curry recalled one occasion when she threatened him with a knife in the kitchen. He said he later conjured images of her when playing frightening characters; he thought of her as Dr Frank-N-Furter emerged from a refrigerator armed with an axe.

After attending Kingswood School in Bath, where he was bullied, he scraped a third in English and drama at the University of Birmingham, one of the first places to offer a drama degree. He skipped classes so often that when he showed up to his final exam, the professor told him to leave because he thought Curry was an intruder.

His eccentric habits included collecting butterflies.

In his early years Curry wanted to be a singer as much as he wanted to pursue acting. Either way he was a terrible show-off. "We would go to university parties and end up having a drink," his friend the actor Patrick Barlow recalled, "and he would break out into song, this marvellous bluesy voice." Life after university, however, was a struggle. In order to pay his rent he — quite literally — sang for his supper. His landlord was the leader of a 1950s-style swing band that played once a week in the fire hall in Wolverhampton.

"I was a Billie Holiday fan at the time," recalled Curry, "so I would be singing about half an hour behind the beat — 'Owall of meeee' — and in the middle of conducting, this man would sort of edge over to me and mutter, 'Sing on the beat, you little twit, they're all falling over their feet.'"

In 1968 Curry was at London's Palace Theatre, looking down upon the head of Judi Dench as Sally Bowles in *Cabaret*, when he turned to his friend Barlow and whispered: "That's what I want to be." Forty years later he would indeed be singing in *Spamalot* in the same theatre. Before that, though, he scored a career-changing part in the West End musical *Hair*.

The casting directors were searching for someone with previous professional experience and an Equity card, and when they asked Curry for his resumé he lied, landing the role anyway. The producers eventually found out that he had neither an Equity card nor experience of any note, yet according to Curry, they were so impressed with his performance that they decided to not only keep him but sponsor him for union membership. For the part in *Hair* he could draw from his own experiences as a hippy in the 1960s: when guests arrived for dinner, he said, he would offer them wine or "the stuffing" — his special hash-laced roast chicken dish.

He conjured images of his mother when playing frightening characters

Curry lived down the street from a gym, the same one that a playwright called Richard O'Brien visited to see if he could find a "muscleman who could sing" for his new musical about a transvestite. "I said, 'Why do you need him to sing?'" Curry recalled. "And he told me that his musical was going to be done, and I should talk to [the director] Jim Sharman. He gave me the script, and I thought, 'Boy, this is going to be a smash.'"

The early performances in fact fell flat, and Curry began drinking. "I just went home and took out a bottle of vodka for about a month, actually," he said. "I sent out for submarine sandwiches and drank and got hugely patched."

When *The Rocky Horror Show* moved to the screen it began quickly assembling a flock of zealous fans, but Curry later tried to distance himself from the show, often skirting interviews.

"I can't really relate to the film very well," he said. "I still feel sick when I see it." He also hated being remembered solely for the part of Frank-N-Furter. When he was interviewed for Jam Magazine in 1979, and was asked

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Register

Sergei Ivanov

Russian minister of defence with a brief to modernise who then became deputy prime minister to his old friend Vladimir Putin

Forty years ago, Helsinki was regarded as one of Europe's leading spy centres, where East met West on neutral territory under the watchful eye of the Finnish intelligence service, Supo. The Soviet embassy was central to this and cultivating influential Finns was among its main tasks. Everyone who was anyone had a "pet Russian" to take them out to lunch. Sergei Ivanov, a third secretary at the embassy, was a keen luncher.

Although he spoke Swedish (Finland's second official language), he preferred English. He was urbane and personable and the briar pipe he smoked gave him the air of a literary curate. His guests found him relaxed and agreeable, even without much alcohol, realistic about developments in the Soviet Union and more ready to hear opposing arguments, except on the Baltic states. One guest noted that he kept an attaché case by his chair. Every 45 minutes he would take a trip to the gents, taking his case with him, presumably to turn the C-90 cassette tape over.

Ivanov might have spent an agreeable career in the guise of a diplomat but for two things. The first was the defection of Oleg Gordievsky in 1985, which the Moscow authorities blamed on the Leningrad directorate of the KGB, Ivanov's mothership. It led to purges that Ivanov believed damaged his prospects. "Gordievsky turned me in," he said. "I got certain problems at work."

He marked time in Helsinki for five more years, then was posted to Nairobi, a sideways move at best. The second, much larger, event was the collapse of the Soviet Union, which created opportunities for rapid ascent within a crumbling system.

Sergei Borisovich Ivanov was born into a white-collar family in Leningrad in 1953. His father died young and he was raised by his mother, an engineer. Her brother was a sea captain who inspired a romantic interest in travel. Somehow he also came to love the Beatles. His secondary school offered an intensive English curriculum, including Galsworthy and Somerset Maugham, inspiring him to try for a diplomatic career. He spent five years at Leningrad State University, where he was an active member of the Komsomol, the youth wing of the Communist Party. In 1974 he attended English language courses at Ealing Technical College, lodging with a local family loyal to the Communist Party.

After graduating with a degree in English in 1975, he was invited to join the KGB in Leningrad. In 1977 he graduated from the KGB academy in Minsk and in 1982 from the KGB's Moscow "School 101". He worked alongside Vladimir Putin for two years. The two men stayed in touch, going on combined family holidays.

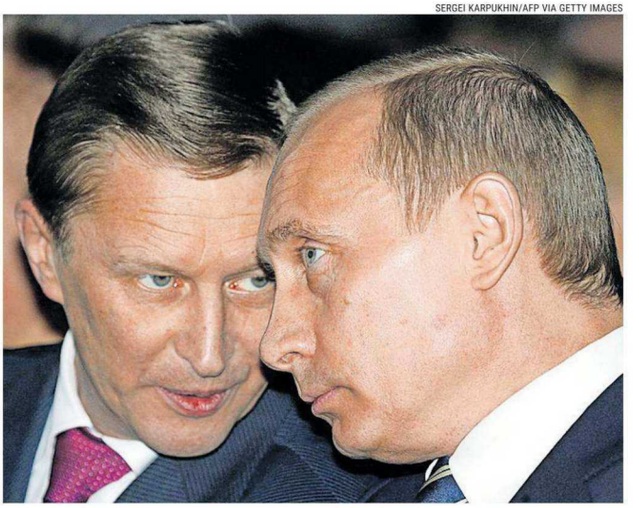
He learnt Swedish in preparation for a posting to Stockholm. It fell through, seemingly because the Swedish authorities had worked out for whom he worked. He instead went to Helsinki, where he was in the Diplomatic Association, which some naively took to be a forum for diplomats to meet socially.

The briar pipe he smoked gave him the air of a literary curate

From 1991 he served in the External Intelligence Service (SVR). His career advanced steadily if unspectacularly: by 1998, he was deputy director of the European department. That July, Putin was appointed director of the Federal Security Service of Russia (FSB) and invited Ivanov to join him as his deputy. The following year President Yeltsin appointed Ivanov secretary of the Security Council, a position of real influence. One of his first acts was to draft an Information Security Doctrine reintroducing state censorship.

In March 2001 Putin, now president, appointed him minister of defence. His brief was to modernise. The appointment was unpopular with the military, which resented the imposition of a minister with a KGB background.

SERGEI KARPUKHIN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Ivanov with President Putin at a military celebration in Moscow in 2006

Ivanov's tenure began with a series of events that showed up the military's many inadequacies: helicopter crashes; explosions at ammunition depots; attacks by Chechen militants; the accidental shooting-down of a Russian passenger aircraft flying from Jerusalem to Novosibirsk. He denounced military commanders for their lack of initiative and grit. He appealed to Putin to restore the five-pointed communist red star to the insignia of the Russian Armed Forces (Putin did) and rename Volgograd Stalingrad (Putin did not).

He proposed a gradual transition of the army to a professional, contract-based system with shorter periods of conscription, finding no wider support. He then withdrew Russian troops from KFOR, the Nato-led peacekeeping force in Kosovo, and tightened up conscription, introducing a system of "forceful recruitment" — in other words, press gangs.

In October 2003, Ivanov announced an overhaul of military policy. Russia now reserved the right to take preventive strikes against other states: the "Ivanov doctrine". He was widely believed to have authorised the assassination of the Chechen separatist leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev in 2004. Later, he dismissed the murder of Alexander Litvinenko as almost beneath his notice. Overall, his approach was hawkish, authoritarian and mostly backward-looking. His efforts to deal with corruption, brutality and *dedovshchina*, the informal but institutionalised bullying of new recruits, were ineffectual. But by Russian standards he was a reformer who got on with westerners.

In November 2005 Ivanov was additionally appointed deputy prime minister of the Russian Federation. He was relieved of his defence role in 2007 and elevated to first deputy prime minister. He was widely seen as a possible candidate in the 2008 presidential elections, for which Putin was ineligible. But he denied holding any such ambitions and Putin supported Dmitry Medvedev. Putin may have seen Medvedev as more malleable and less of a rival; he may also have doubted whether Ivanov would stand up to the oligarchs.

Putin became prime minister, with Ivanov as his deputy and, from 2011, his chief of staff. In that role he was an administrator with a low public profile but he was Putin's right-hand man.

In 2016 he was appointed special presidential representative for environmental protection, ecology and transport. The headlines said he had been sacked but he may have wanted to wind down gently, enjoying fishing and detective stories in the original English. However, he remained active enough to appear on the Ukraine sanctions list. He retired fully in February this year, amid rumours he had cancer. His death was announced by a basketball league. Putin sent condolences.

Ivanov married Irina Sergeievna, an economist, in 1976. They had two sons, Alexander and Sergei. Alexander, a banker, was briefly notorious in 2005 when he hit and killed a pensioner as she crossed a road; he was found to have committed no crime. He drowned accidentally in Dubai in 2014. Sergei was chief executive of Alrosa, Russia's state-controlled diamond mining company.

Though Ivanov had a reputation for probity, the Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) estimated his family wealth as roughly $54 million.

Sergei Ivanov, Russian diplomat and politician, was born on January 31, 1953. He died of pneumonia on June 26, 2026, aged 73

Continued from page 49 Tim Curry

whether he thought that audiences had typecast him, Curry responded, "I think that is one of the most boring journalistic openings I have ever heard."

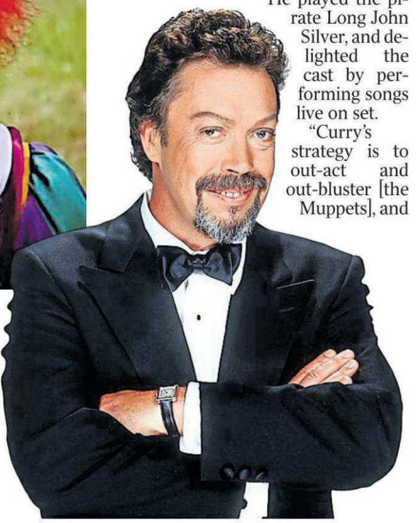
After the roaring success of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, Curry spent three years in New York making records as a rock singer. Touring was, he said in a New York Times interview, "incredibly debilitating. You can almost count the years you're taking off your life when you're doing it. And, anyway, I was thinking, if I don't get back to the theatre, I'm going to forget how to do it. At which point Peter Shaffer called up with *Amadeus*."

Curry had not done a play in five years, and had forgotten how much he enjoyed it, so he returned to London and joined the National Theatre for two seasons, performing in *The Rivals* by Richard Sheridan and *The Threepenny Opera* by Brecht, "a dreadful, abortive production of a play I'd always wanted to do and then made a terrible pig's ear of".

He was so energetic on set that a nurse had to take his blood pressure

There were more villainous roles, including in *Oliver Twist*: "Sikes is a psychopath," said Curry, "but he's also a roaring alcoholic. I figured that his brain had kind of rotted, that there was maybe ten minutes a day when he was lucid, but I wanted to give a tiny glimpse of the man that might have been."

In 1988 he moved to LA after a tour of *Me and My Girl*, a musical by Noel Gay. In his later career he used his deep, sonorous voice as a successful voiceover artist in the animated TV series *The Rugrats Movie*, *Scooby-Doo! and the Witch's Ghost*, *Paddington Bear* (Mr Curry) and *Peter Pan & the Pirates* (Captain Hook).



Curry as Pennywise in the 1990 TV mini-series of Stephen King's It. Right, in Over the Top, a 1997 sitcom, which he also produced

"One of the reasons I started doing cartoons is I really wanted to play American characters, and they let me play American characters in cartoons," Curry told the journalist Frank Lovece. "So it's been a way for me to work on my American accents."

He later said that one of the happiest sets he ever worked on was for the 1996 film *Muppet Treasure Island*, where there was a "conspicuous lack of ego". He played the pirate Long John Silver, and delighted the cast by performing songs live on set.

"Curry's strategy is to out-act and out-bluster [the Muppets], and mostly he succeeds," Roger Ebert, the film critic, said.

He gave every part his all, once exerting so much energy filming *Clue*, a murder mystery, that a nurse had to take his blood pressure on set.

"The characters I have played tend to be grimly larger than life," Curry said. "A lot of actors are content to be overheard, whereas I tend to speak up. And this face is writ pretty large, really."

In his final years Curry lived in an opulent colonial-style villa in Los Angeles with a lavish garden and a dog called, ironically, Frank. His memoir is filled with dinners with Bowie, cocaine feasts with Truman Capote and a frisson with Donald Trump on the set of *Home Alone 2: Lost in New York* (he played the concierge of the Plaza hotel, which Trump owned).

Curry never married nor had children but he rather liked being alone, even after he suffered a stroke in 2012, which left him reliant on a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

"I like it that way. I'm good at my own company," he said. "Still, I can't help feeling that everyone's favourite extrovert is actually a rather solitary, serious man. The call comes through to his dressing room: it's time he was on stage, being silly again."

Tim Curry, actor, was born on April 19, 1946. After suffering long-term health problems, he died on August 25, 2026, aged 80

Register

Law Report

Director had duty to pursue strategy as agreed by board

Supreme Court
Published August 27, 2026

Saxon Woods Investments Ltd v Costa

Before Lord Sales, Lord Briggs, Lord Hamblen, Lord Burrows and Lady Rose
[2026] UKSC 21
Judgment July 14, 2026

The principle that the courts would not interfere with directors' bona fide exercise of their business judgment, in managing the company's affairs in what they considered to be its best interests, did not extend to the covert pursuit by one director of their own judgment as to the company's best interests, in direct conflict with the strategy resolved upon by the board as a whole.

The Supreme Court so held in dismissing an appeal by the first respondent director, Francesco Costa, and affirming, on slightly different grounds, the decision of the Court of Appeal ([2025] EWCA Civ 708; [2025] Bus LR 2443) overturning the refusal of Simon Gleeson sitting as a deputy judge of the Chancery Division ([2024] EWHC 387 (Ch)) to grant a petition by Saxon Woods Investments Ltd ("the petitioner").

The petitioner, as a shareholder in Spring Media Investments Ltd ("the company"), petitioned the court under section 994 of the Companies Act 2006 for relief from unfair prejudice on the basis that the first respondent had been personally responsible for the failure to abide by a shareholders' agreement, which was approved by the board, to work in good faith towards the company's sale by December 31, 2019.

The first respondent had adopted various tactics to achieve his objective of effectuating a later sale, which he believed would generate a better financial return for the company, including misleading the board. However, the prospect of a profitable sale was destroyed by the adverse impact of the Covid pandemic on the company's business in and after 2020.

The Court of Appeal ordered an unconditional buyout by the first respondent of the petitioner's shares, with the exact value (as at the end of 2019) to be determined at a further hearing in the High Court.

The Companies Act 2006 provides by section 172: "(1) A director of a company must act in the way he considers, in good faith, would be most likely to promote the success of the company for the benefit of its members as a whole ... "

Jonathan Crow KC and **Lara Hassell-Hart** for the first respondent; **Edward Davies KC** and **Jack Rivett** for the petitioner.

LORD BRIGGS (with whom the other members of the court agreed) said that the appeal was concerned with the standard of conduct required of a company director when he genuinely disagreed with his fellow directors as to the best route to achieving success for the company.

The first respondent contended that if the director genuinely believed that his preferred way forward for the company was the most likely to promote its success for the benefit of its members as a whole, it was entirely a matter for him how to act to secure that objective. If he concealed his chosen course of conduct from his fellow directors, and even actively misled them for that purpose, he could not thereby be held to have committed a breach of the duty in section 172(1), even where (as in the present case) the course chosen by him turned out to have been disastrous for the company.

The principle that it was for directors to exercise their business judgment in managing the affairs of a company, with which the court would not interfere if the directors acted bona fide in what they considered to be in the best interests of the company, was of long standing. The principle had come to be applied generally to the exercise of all discretionary powers by the board.

Under a typical corporate constitution, it therefore applied to all aspects of the general power of management of the company's affairs by the board. It implemented the obvious intention of the framers of the company's constitution that it was upon the board of directors and no one else that the exercise of business judgment about the management of the company's affairs had been conferred. That meant the board as a whole, acting unanimously or by majority, subject to any provision to the contrary in the articles.

That duty had been understood in authorities and textbooks as a fiduciary duty of loyalty, and the test for breach of it, whether by the board or by individual directors, had been described as subjective, ie the court would not interfere with the (subjective) view of the directors merely because it formed a different (objective) view of what was really in the best interests of the company. That principle had come to be applied not only to decisions of the board, but also to decisions or acts of individual directors, in deciding whether a particular act amounted to a breach of fiduciary duty.

However, no authority or academic writing prior to 2006 suggested that the court's respect for the business judgment of directors extended to a case where one director had sought to pursue his own judgment as to the best way to promote the company's best interests by a covert strategy (ie concealed from his fellow directors) to pursue an objective which directly conflicted with the business judgment and strategy already resolved upon by the board as a whole. That was unsurprising, because such conduct would appear to be obviously disloyal by a fiduciary, and contrary to the mode of governance of the company laid down by its typical constitution. It would not appear to be acting in good faith.

A duty not covertly or otherwise to subvert the management of the company's affairs by the board as a whole was not expressly mentioned in section 172 or elsewhere in Chapter 2 of the Act as being, or being part of, one of the general duties. But it was best regarded as part of the section 172 general duty, rather than something completely separate from it, for a number of reasons.

First, primary responsibility for promoting the success of the company for the benefit of its members as a whole was reposed by the typical company constitution upon its board. Section 172 easily accommodated that communal obligation by reading the singular "director" as including the plural.

Secondly, if that primary board responsibility was to be discharged effectively, an individual director had to bring his independent view of the best way to promote the success of the company to the attention of his colleagues on the board, and he could not by covert conduct pursue some other strategy than that decided upon by the board.

Thirdly, there were numerous indications in Chapter 2 of the 2006 Act that it was intended to affirm rather than impede the proper governance of the company in accordance with its constitution.

Fourthly, the concept of assimilating specific duties by directors to make disclosure to the board within what was now the section 172 duty was affirmed by authority, including *Item Software (UK) Ltd v Fassihi* ([2005] 2 BCLC 91, para 41).

Finally, it was no answer to a claim of breach of the section 172 duty that the matter complained of looked more like a breach of one of the other general duties. A director who acted in breach of one of the other general duties would often also be in breach of his duty under section 172(1).

Read in isolation, it might be suggested that the requirement for good faith in section 172 only governed the director's thinking, rather than his conduct. The alternative view was that the requirement for good faith extended not merely to the director's thinking but also to his conduct in the pursuit of achieving what he believed was the best course for the company to take. While the rigorous application of grammatical rules might be said to favour the first of those alternatives, the second was clearly to be preferred, because it was more consistent with a codification of the existing law, it fitted section 172 better into its context as part of Chapter 2, and with its purpose, and it strained credulity to think that the first alternative could have been intended, because of its consequences.

Accordingly, the Court of Appeal was correct to hold that a breach by the first respondent of his duty under section 172 was made out on the facts. The Court of Appeal had focused its analysis upon a conclusion that the first respondent had acted dishonestly, applying the objective test laid down in *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) Ltd* ([2017] UKSC 67; [2018] AC 391; The Times, October 25, 2017).

However, where the defendant owed a fiduciary duty of loyalty, the question was whether that duty had been breached, and while dishonesty might be evidence of that, the duty itself supplied the relevant analytical framework; it was unnecessary to elaborate it by reference to the Ivey case. But the outcome was the same; namely, that there was a breach of section 172 by the first respondent.

Solicitors: **DLA Piper UK LLP; Stephenson Harwood LLP**.

Court Circular

Balmoral Castle
26th August, 2026
By command of The King, Mr Alistair Harrison (Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps) called upon Her Excellency Mrs Ismara Mercedes Vargas Walter at 167 High Holborn, London WC1, this afternoon in order to bid farewell to Her Excellency upon relinquishing her appointment as Ambassador from the Republic of Cuba to the Court of St James's.

Births, Marriages and Deaths

To book a Birth, Marriage or Death announcement in the Register, visit: newsukadvertising.co.uk for help, please call 020 7782 7553 or email BMDs@thetimes.co.uk

LET NOT your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. John 14.1-2 (AV)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Births

FUREDI on 13th August 2026 to Róisín (née Lanigan) and Jacob, a son, Bram Naoise Furedi.

MCPARLAND on 17th August 2026 to Molly and Richard, a daughter, Zoe Elizabeth Dow.

Forthcoming Marriages

DR J. NAYLOR AND DR A. L. JOYCE
The engagement is announced between Johnny, son of Mr Pete Naylor and Helen Bayliss of Altass, Sutherland and Alice, only daughter of the late Mr Anthony Joyce and Mrs Alyson Joyce of Methven, Perthshire.

Anniversaries

RANFT : OLIVER
Congratulations to Peter and Susan Ranft on their 60th wedding anniversary. Lots of love from your children and grandchildren.

Deaths

ASTLEY BIRTWISTLE Evelyn (née Humphries) died suddenly on 3rd August 2026, aged 65. Dearly loved wife of Damien, beloved mother to Emma and Samantha and cherished sister. Funeral at St Mary's Church, Wimbledon Village. Details to follow.

BROADBENT Angus passed away on Thursday 13th August 2026, aged 62. Beloved husband to Richenda, adored daddy to Phoebe and Lara, cherished son to Earle and Stella and much-loved brother to Robin, Nicola and Graham. He will be so sadly missed by all the Broadbent and Evans-Freke families and friends. Memorial service at St John's Church, Notting Hill, Friday 20th November, 3.30pm. All welcome. Donations to Prospect Hospice, Swindon and Wigmore Hall Trust c/o Dianne Mackinder Funeral Service, tel: (01672) 512444.

COCKBURN John Alasdair Murray died peacefully after a short illness, aged 80. Beloved husband of Carole, adoring father of Gail and Iain and devoted grandpa to five. Funeral to take place at 2.15pm on Wednesday 9th September at Guildford Crematorium, New Pond Road, Godalming, GU7 3DB, followed by a celebration to remember Alasdair at Hankley Common Golf Club, Tilford Road, Farnham, GU10 2DD. Family flowers only. Donations, if desired, to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Inquiries to Thorne Leggett Funeral Directors on 01252 982767.

KING Colin Francis, died peacefully on 11th August 2026, aged 84. Retired drama lecturer at St Luke's College, Exeter, from 1966. Formerly of East Wittering, latterly of Budleigh Salterton — he loved the sea in all its moods. Devoted sparring partner and friend to his wife, Gabrielle, and loving father of Benjamin — beloved and already greatly missed. Private cremation, donations if desired to RNLI, for the benefit of Selsey Lifeboat Station, West Sussex. Recollections of Colin most welcome. All inquiries c/o LeRoy Funerals, 01392 255535.

LASZLO Peter JRA died peacefully on 17th August 2026 at home in Waddington, aged 94. Beloved husband of Hilary, father of Nicholas and Tamara, stepfather of Nick and Philippa and Opapa of six. A private burial will take place. Funeral arrangements by Brian Price and Son Ltd, funeral directors. Tel: 01200 441297.

STOCK Anthea Margaret passed away on 25th July 2026, aged 85. The funeral took place in Bristol on 25th August.

WHEELER Nicholas Derek on 10th August 2026, aged 87. Beloved father, grandfather, brother and uncle. A wise and loving man, he will be sorely missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him. Funeral to be held at St Luke's Church, Tunbridge Wells, on Thursday 27th August 2027 at 12.30pm.

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Niamh Chalmers and Eleanor Smith, both 28, were married on April 5, 2025, at The Engine Works, in Glasgow. They featured in The Times on Saturday June 28, 2025

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Day 7	**Tallinn, Estonia**
Day 8	**Helsinki, Finland**
Day 9 - Day 10	**Stockholm, Sweden** (overnight)
Day 11	**Visby, Sweden**
Day 13	**Kristiansand, Norway**
Day 15	**Arrive in Southampton**

Days not mentioned will be spent relaxing at sea

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Day 8	**Florence/Pisa (from Livorno), Italy**
Day 9	**Rome (from Civitavecchia), Italy**
Day 10	**Ajaccio, Corsica, France**
Day 15	**Arrive in Southampton**

Days not mentioned will be spent relaxing at sea

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Today Largely dry and sunny in the northwest, heavy and thundery rain elsewhere. Max 24C (75F), min 12C (54F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder *=previous day **=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday		Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr*
Aberdeen	18	C	0.0	1.3
Aberporth	21	C	3.0	3.6
Anglesey	22	PC	0.4	4.2
Aviemore	21	PC	0.0	6.5
Barnstaple	25	PC	0.0	**
Bedford	24	C	4.2	**
Belfast	18	R	2.0	0.9
Birmingham	24	C	0.0	**
Bournemouth	24	S	0.0	9.2
Bridlington	20	S	0.0	**
Bristol	**	**	0.0	3.8
Camborne	19	C	0.2	0.1
Cardiff	24	S	0.8	0.1
Edinburgh	20	PC	0.0	0.8
Eskdalemuir	20	PC	0.0	1.9
Glasgow	19	PC	0.0	1.2
Hereford	24	C	0.0	**
Herstmonceux	25	PC	0.2	9.7
Ipswich	22	C	0.0	11.6
Isle of Man	18	PC	0.6	3.7
Isle of Wight	24	S	0.0	**
Jersey	21	PC	0.0	6.2
Keswick	19	R	0.6	**
Kinloss	18	**	0.0	11.0
Leeds	22	C	0.0	**
Lerwick	16	S	0.0	10.0
Leuchars	18	PC	0.0	1.6
Lincoln	24	PC	0.0	8.4
Liverpool	20	R	0.0	**
London	26	PC	0.6	12.0
Lyneham	24	PC	0.2	7.6
Manchester	23	C	1.6	3.0
Margate	23	S	0.6	12.9
Milford Haven	20	C	3.8	**
Newcastle	22	S	0.0	**
Nottingham	22	C	1.4	9.4
Orkney	17	PC	0.0	**
Oxford	26	PC	0.0	**
Plymouth	22	B	0.2	**
Portland	21	C	0.0	**
Scilly, St Mary's	19	C	0.0	**
Shoreham	26	PC	0.0	11.0
Shrewsbury	23	PC	4.4	6.7
Snowdonia	20	PC	1.6	**
Southend	21	S	7.8	12.7
South Uist	17	PC	0.0	**
Stornoway	17	S	0.0	11.4
Tiree	18	R	0.0	7.1
Whitehaven	20	C	0.0	5.7
Wick	16	C	0.0	**
Yeovilton	23	PC	0.2	1.1

The world

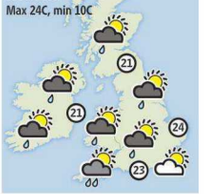
All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	34	S	Madeira	24	B
Amsterdam	25	PC	Madrid	27	PC
Athens	34	S	Malaga	30	S
Auckland	17	PC	Mallorca	34	PC
Bahrain	40	S	Malta	40	S
Bangkok	32	PC	Melbourne	13	B
Barbados	31	PC	Mexico City	20	B
Barcelona	30	PC	Miami	32	PC
Beijing	28	S	Milan	27	PC
Beirut	**	**	Mombasa	30	PC
Belgrade	30	S	Montreal	23	B
Berlin	22	S	Moscow	15	B
Bermuda	30	PC	Mumbai	31	**
Bordeaux	32	S	Munich	25	PC
Brussels	24	PC	Nairobi	26	S
Bucharest	25	PC	Naples	33	S
Budapest	29	S	New Orleans	32	PC
Buenos Aires	14	S	New York	23	B
Cairo	34	S	Nice	27	S
Calcutta	32	**	Nicosia	33	PC
Canberra	16	B	Oslo	22	PC
Cape Town	23	S	Paris	27	B
Chicago	26	PC	Perth	21	B
Copenhagen	22	PC	Prague	20	PC
Corfu	34	PC	Reykjavik	11	B
Delhi	33	**	Riga	18	PC
Dubai	44	PC	Rio de Janeiro	21	C
Dublin	18	B	Riyadh	43	S
Faro	24	PC	Rome	33	S
Florence	32	PC	San Francisco	19	B
Frankfurt	24	PC	Santiago	19	C
Geneva	26	S	São Paulo	17	DU
Gibraltar	26	PC	Seoul	29	B
Helsinki	20	B	Seychelles	29	PC
Hong Kong	29	PC	Singapore	29	T
Honolulu	**	**	St Petersburg	19	PC
Istanbul	28	S	Stockholm	21	S
Jerusalem	33	S	Sydney	17	B
Johannesburg	23	S	Tel Aviv	33	S
Kuala Lumpur	31	PC	Tenerife	27	PC
Kyiv	**	**	Tokyo	33	PC
Lanzarote	28	PC	Vancouver	24	PC
Las Palmas	28	PC	Venice	28	PC
Lima	21	DU	Vienna	26	S
Lisbon	23	PC	Warsaw	22	PC
Los Angeles	28	PC	Washington	27	B
Luxor	40	S	Zurich	26	PC

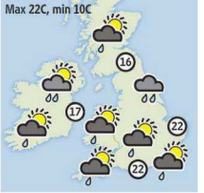
Five days ahead

An unsettled period with bright intervals and frequent outbreaks of rain and showers

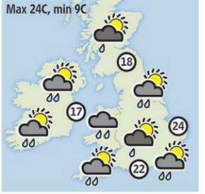
Tomorrow
Dry with some sunshine in southeast England. Bright periods and scattered showers elsewhere, heaviest in the southwest.
Max 24C, min 10C



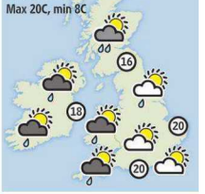
Saturday
Bright intervals and showery outbreaks of rain, heaviest in northern England and western Ireland by the afternoon.
Max 22C, min 10C



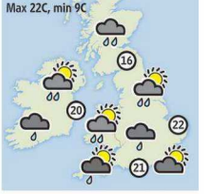
Sunday
Remaining unsettled with patchy cloud and plenty of rain, heaviest in Ireland through the morning and western Britain later.
Max 24C, min 9C



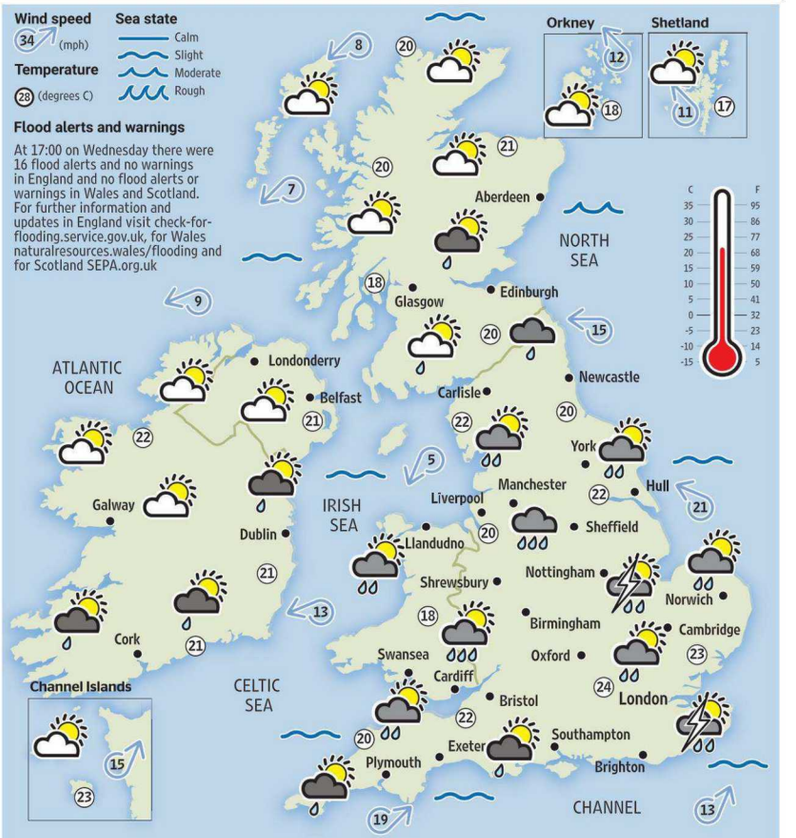
Monday
Dry with sunny spells in central and southeast England. Bright periods and scattered showers elsewhere, heaviest in the north.
Max 20C, min 8C



Tuesday
A blustery day with outbreaks of rain and showers, heaviest across Scotland and northern England through the morning.
Max 22C, min 9C



The Times weather page is provided by WeatherQuest

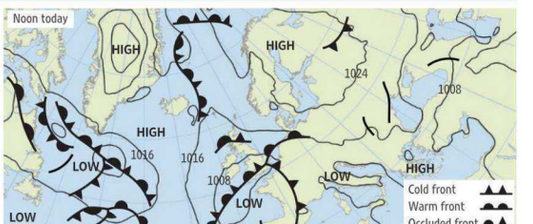


General situation: Dry with sunny periods in northwest Ireland and Scotland, heavy rain elsewhere.
Republic of Ireland, N Ireland: Dry with sunny periods in the northwest. Bright intervals and showery rain elsewhere, heaviest by the afternoon. Light to moderate north to northeasterly winds, fresh in the southwest. Maximum 22C (72F), minimum 13C (55F).
NW Scotland, NE Scotland, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, Cen Highland, N Isles, Argyll: A mainly dry day with the best of the sunshine in the Hebrides through the morning. One or two spots of drizzle may move into the region by late afternoon. Light to moderate east to southeasterly winds. Maximum 21C (70F), minimum 12C (54F).
Edinburgh and Dundee, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Borders, Lake District, IoM, NE Eng: Dry with sunny intervals in the morning. Bright spells and a few heavy showers later. Light to moderate east to southeasterly winds. Maximum 22C (72F), minimum 12C (54F).
NW Eng, Cen N Eng, W Mids, N Wales, E Mids, E Eng: A day of patchy cloud and thundery showers, heaviest in the afternoon. Light to moderate south to southeasterly winds. Maximum 22C (72F), minimum 13C (55F).
London, E Anglia, Cen S Eng, SE Eng, SW Eng, S Wales, Channel Is: Cloudy with showery outbreaks of rain, heaviest and perhaps turning thundery at first. Light to moderate south to southwesterly winds. Maximum 24C (75F), minimum 13C (55F).

Tides

Tidal predictions.
Heights in metres. All times in local time

Today		Ht		Ht
Aberdeen	01:38	4.0	14:11	3.9
Avonmouth	07:36	11.9	19:55	12.5
Belfast	11:47	3.1	23:54	3.4
Cardiff	07:25	11.2	19:44	11.7
Devonport	06:09	4.9	18:22	5.2
Dover	11:36	6.3	23:52	6.3
Dublin	12:08	3.7	--:--	--
Falmouth	05:45	4.7	17:56	5.0
Greenock	--:--	--	13:05	3.0
Harwich	--:--	--	12:19	3.8
Holyhead	11:00	5.1	23:04	5.5
Hull	06:31	7.0	19:09	6.9
Leith	02:58	5.2	15:25	5.2
Liverpool	11:45	8.6	23:53	9.1
London Bridge	02:14	6.6	14:32	6.6
Lowestoft	09:45	2.5	22:34	2.4
Milford Haven	06:43	6.4	18:58	6.8
Morecambe	11:56	8.6	--:--	--
Newhaven	11:41	6.3	23:53	6.3
Newquay	05:35	6.2	17:49	6.7
Oban	06:23	3.6	18:41	3.9
Penzance	05:09	5.0	17:23	5.3
Portsmouth	--:--	--	12:08	4.5
Shoreham	11:48	5.8	23:57	5.9
Southampton	01:40	3.9	11:13	4.3
Swansea	06:43	8.5	19:02	9.0
Tees	03:58	5.2	16:31	5.2
Weymouth	07:18	1.8	19:32	2.0



Synoptic situation

Occluded and warm fronts associated with a low-pressure system to the southwest of the British Isles will bring patchy cloud and widespread outbreaks of rain and showers to most of England, Wales and southern Ireland, heaviest and perhaps turning thundery in the morning. Drier and brighter in northern Scotland and northwest Ireland.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday
Warmest: Charlwood, Surrey, 28.5C
Coldest: Cairngorm, 3.8C
Wettest: Magilligan, 8.8mm
Sunniest: Manston, Kent, 12.9hrs*

Sun and moon

For Greenwich
Sun rises: 06.05
Sun sets: 19.58
Moon rises: 19.44
Moon sets: 06.15 Fri
Full moon: August 28

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	20:49-05:32
Belfast	20:58-05:53
Birmingham	20:37-05:42
Cardiff	20:40-05:49
Exeter	20:40-05:52
Glasgow	20:54-05:44
Liverpool	20:44-05:44
London	20:28-05:37
Manchester	20:41-05:41
Newcastle	20:42-05:35
Norwich	20:25-05:29
Penzance	20:47-06:01
Sheffield	20:37-05:38

Weather Eye

Paul Simons

The weather has made a spectacular U-turn. For much of this summer, the jet stream was shunted further north, leaving England and Wales stuck under a powerful block of high pressure that cooked up blazing-hot sunshine and hardly a drop of rain for the best part of two months. But now the jet stream has plunged south and the UK is in the grip of low pressure, bringing the return of rain. That sounds like good news for drought-stricken areas but it comes with a warning because many places are being battered by deluges of rain falling on ground baked hard by heat and drought. Where the ground is unable to soak up this massive hit of rain, water can rush off the surface, washing away debris and creating sudden floods.

Added to this volatile mix is the threat of thunderstorms. These storms are being created by hot, humid air near the surface of the ground with very cold air and low pressure much higher up, close to the top of the troposphere. These are the perfect ingredients for an atmospheric explosion — the hot, humid air shoots up high into the sky, packed with energy, and its moisture condenses into towering thunderclouds loaded with rain and crackling with electricity that fires off lightning. This is what used to be called "boisterous weather", a wonderfully evocative description, centuries ago.

The volatile atmosphere has also spread to parts of western Europe. On Monday evening a thunderstorm in southwestern France unleashed an exceptionally powerful tornado that ripped through the village of Pomas, injuring more than 40 people. It left at least 300 homes damaged, some of them reduced to rubble, and thousands of households across the region without power in scenes of devastation more like Tornado Alley in the United States.

The turbulent weather is expected to carry on into the weekend and possibly bank holiday Monday (except in Scotland, where there is no public holiday) as the jet stream carries on diving to the south.

Speak directly to one of our forecasters on 09065 777675

8am to 5pm daily (calls are charged at £1.55 plus network extras)

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Sport

‘I was homeless, stabbed, shot at’ – meet coach of fiery Sabalenka

Jason Stacy overcame odds to become high-performance coach of US Open champion, writes **Tom Kershaw**

It requires a special character to harness the competitive — and occasionally combustible — spirit that has underpinned Aryna Sabalenka’s dominance. In full flight, the ferocity she brings to the tennis court has been borderline unstoppable, accounting for four grand-slam titles in quick succession and 97 consecutive weeks at world No1.

But it can also be a precarious balance. Sabalenka’s spectacular unravelling against Diana Shnaider at the French Open was followed by an urge to “quit tennis right now”. A surprise defeat by Naomi Osaka at Wimbledon prompted a promise to “go get completely drunk”. Only last week in Cincinnati, Sabalenka ran hot and faltered badly again, extending what has — relatively speaking — become a minor crisis.

Enter Jason Stacy: Sabalenka’s high-performance coach, who has acted as a kind of sensei since 2018 when she was still a rising star on the WTA Tour. “First and foremost, the fire that she has, the personality, someone’s strength can sometimes be their biggest weakness as well, if it’s not managed and you don’t learn to understand yourself and how you respond to things,” he says.

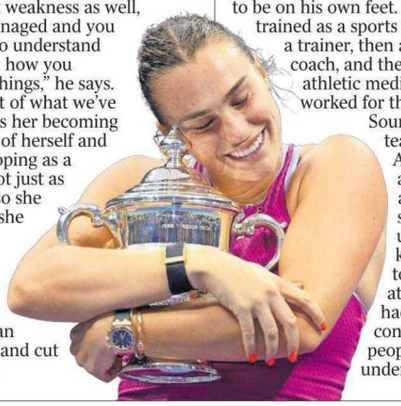
“A big part of what we’ve been doing is her becoming more aware of herself and really developing as a person — not just as a player — so she can be who she is and be expressive.”

It is easier to deliver that message to an elite athlete and cut through the narratives of matches being life and death when you have personally confronted the latter. In many respects, Stacy’s story, which he recounts in his book, *The Pressure Code*, is even more extraordinary than the exploits on court he’s been part of as Sabalenka’s team.

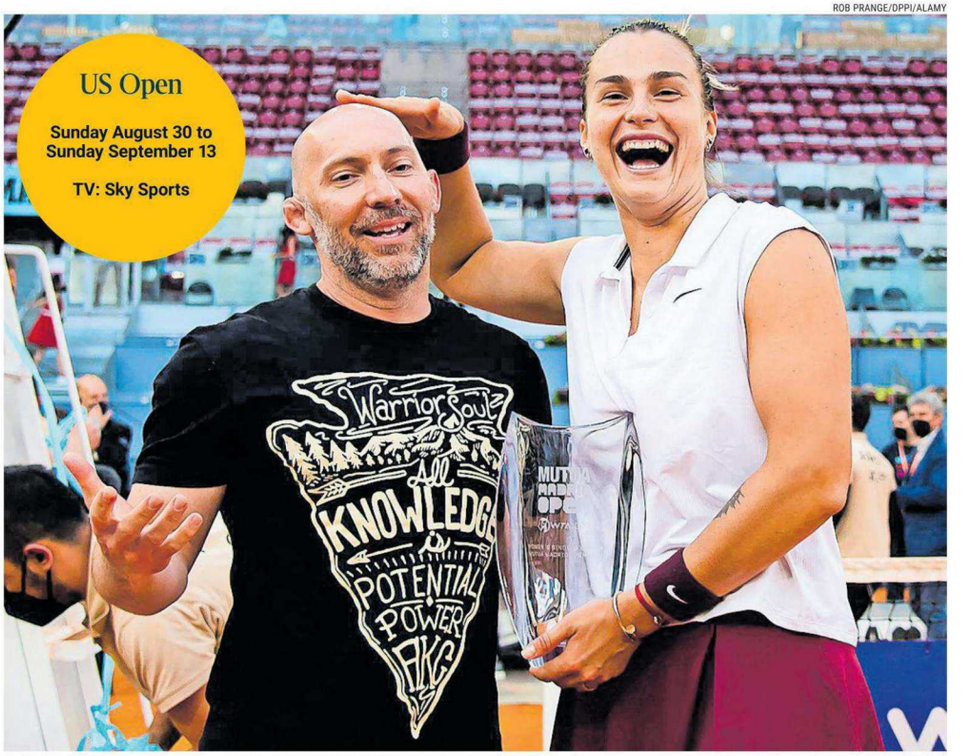
The son of a US Air Force pilot, Stacy became homeless aged 13 shortly after his father’s death and spent several years living on the streets in Tacoma, Washington, in the mid-Eighties when the city was notorious for its high crime rate. “Three of the concussions I’ve had were because of being hit with a gun,” he says. “I’ve been stabbed. I’ve been shot at. It was a combination of being in the wrong place at the right time, the wrong environment, not out of choice but survival. A couple of times it was because I wouldn’t get involved in drugs. That was a boundary I wouldn’t cross.”

Stacy found refuge in a library and spent days reading about science and history. “It was like a sanctuary for me, an escape from the world where I didn’t get asked too many questions,” he says. He also developed a fascination with mixed martial arts and used to peer through the window of a nearby dojo. After Stacy plucked up the courage to go inside and explained his situation, he was offered a place to stay for free for a year.

Between training — Stacy became a black belt in jiu-jitsu — he worked until he had saved up enough money to be on his own feet. From there, he trained as a sports therapist, then a trainer, then a strength coach, and then studied athletic medicine. He worked for the Seattle Sounders football team, with HIV/Aids patients at a medical clinic, and at high schools and universities. “I knew I wanted to work with athletes, and I had a really good connection with people to understand what they’re capable of and they had better results so they trusted me quickly,” Stacy says. “There were times when I would be awake for three days straight, working, going from one event to another. I just went in with the mentality of ‘Whatever I’m doing at that moment, that’s all that matters.’ I knew if I was going to get anywhere with my life, I had to do this, and that built my reputation.”



ROB PRANGE/DPPI/ALAMY



Sabalenka has won four grand-slam titles, including the 2024 US Open, below, since she began working with Stacy in 2018

Wawrinka’s New York farewell

Former champion Stan Wawrinka will get to say farewell at the US Open after all. The 2016 winner, who is retiring at the end of this season, received a wild card yesterday after American Patrick Kypson withdrew injured. “I’m incredibly excited,” the Swiss said.

Stacy had worked with Olympians and world champions in jiu-jitsu, judo and swimming and spent years around the tennis tour when Sabalenka’s coach at the time, Dmitry Tursunov, put the pair together.

“Technically, you could see there were some issues,” Stacy says of his first impressions of Sabalenka, who was 20. “Physically she was strong but very disconnected. There was not a very good awareness of her body. She would have probably been one of those players who does pretty well, wins a few things, then kind of disappears or has lots of injuries.

“The other thing was the emotional control side. I thought if we can put those pieces together, she’s going to do really well for herself.”

Stacy initially focused on Sabalenka’s fitness but he is now essentially the chief executive of her team, and her recent blip still pales in significance to some of the hurdles they have already navigated. In 2019, Sabalenka’s father, Sergey, died suddenly from meningitis aged 43. By 2021, she had reached No2 in the world, but the Belarusian then inexplicably began to suffer from the yips on her serve. In 2022, she served 428 double faults, far more than any other player on tour.

“It was a technical thing that became a mental thing and it grew into a monster,” Stacy says.

The nadir was reached in Toronto in August 2022 when Sabalenka served 18 double faults in a defeat by Coco Gauff and contemplated quitting tennis. Stacy compelled her to take an extended break and completely rebuild her serve technique with a biomechanist he hired. “You can choose if you’re going to come back and play tennis ever again, if that’s how you’re thinking right now, but it doesn’t matter. This has to happen,” he recalls.

Sabalenka won her maiden grand-slam title at the Australian Open the following January, ushering in a period in which precious few players have managed to rival her. After nearly two years as the world No1, it was perhaps inevitable that cracks would start to form, even if the manner in which Sabalenka lost 12 of the last 13 games against Shnaider felt like a deeper fissure and was “a shock to everybody”.

To defuse the tension, Stacy often tries to incorporate games, bets and pranks into training, along with breathing exercises — acts that can sometimes appear trivial, like playing football with balloons or promising to get a temporary copy of Sabalenka’s tiger tattoo on his head if she reached last year’s US Open final, but are carefully designed to ensure she steps on to the court in the right mindset.

One of the keys to Stacy’s philosophy has been to bring light to the shade — a lesson learnt under the harshest circumstances — and retain a sense of perspective.

“I think in some ways [players] take themselves way too seriously; not to say you shouldn’t at times, but I think sometimes we get a little carried away,” he says. “They are humans. Yes, they’re pushing their edges. They’re doing things that most people aren’t. Every minute of their day is focused on one thing. I have a lot of respect for that, but if you want to not just perform at your best, but be able to sustain that, you need to be healthy as a person: mentally, emotionally, physically. You need to be able to look back and be proud and know you did everything you could and the values you stand for.”

● The Pressure Code: How Elite Performers Align Their Energy, Emotions, and Environment *by Jason Stacy is published on September 8*

‘Binman’ Brennan claims imperious second win at La Vuelta

Cycling
Sean Russell

Matthew Brennan has made it two stage victories from two sprint finishes at La Vuelta after an imperious display into the town of Roquetes on stage five.

The 21-year-old from Darlington is competing at his first grand tour and so far it has been a dominant display from the “Binman”. Brennan got his nickname from his first club, the Stockton Wheelers, where the finish line of training rides was marked by a wheelie bin.

After Tadej Pogacar stamped his authority on the race by putting a 3min 21sec gap between himself and second-placed Primoz Roglic in the general classification on stage four into Andorra la Vella, stage five was an opportunity for someone else. But no strong breakaway was able to establish itself over the hilly stage and so the finale came down to a reduced peloton sprint.

Wout van Aert and Christophe Laporte, of Visma-Lease a Bike, gave a textbook lead to Brennan, navigating two right-angle corners smoothly into the small town in Catalonia before unleashing Brennan. Jordi Meeus, of Red Bull-Bora-Hansgrohe, had no answer and settled for second. Brennan looked like he could even have stepped it up a gear had he needed to.

“[The sprint] was pretty spot on,” Brennan said. “We had the two boys pulling on the front until the final few kilometres and Wout and Christophe are probably some of the … in fact *the* best guys you can have in the world for this type of thing and they supported me all the way into the final.”

Brennan, who also won stage two, added: “I wouldn’t say I’m a sprinter. I can climb a little bit and on this kind of terrain it works really nicely, especially with the kind of support I have here.”

Today’s sixth stage covers 177km from Alcossebre to Castelló, with four categorised climbs.

Solheim Cup captain's shock retirement

Golf
Cathy Harris

Anna Nordqvist has never been anything but searingly honest about how her ex-husband's unexpected death in October 2023 affected her. She has described the years since as devastating and has now announced her shock retirement at the age of 39.

The timing has come as a surprise, considering the three-times major winner is set to captain Team Europe in the Solheim Cup in the Netherlands from September 11 to 13. Announcing her decision via social media, the nine-times Solheim Cup player said she will call it a day after this weekend's FM Championship in Boston.

"I'm not sure what the future has in store for me but it is with a grateful heart I have decided to retire from playing professional golf to focus on my health and my family," she wrote.

"I've fallen so many times, but I never gave up and I stood up every time I fell. I am forever thankful for everything this game has given me and the people I have met along the way."

She later added at a press conference: "I probably owe a few close people an apology for not giving them the heads-up. I felt I needed to do something for myself and I've had an incredible career. It's been really cool to call this my job because it doesn't feel like I worked a day in my life.

"I made the decision early this year this was going to be my last year. This year I finally started feeling like myself again inside the ropes and I wanted to finish my career on a note where I was enjoying the game, and I felt like I was in a good place on and off the course."

Nordqvist married Kevin McAlpine, a former Scottish amateur champion and son of the former Dundee United goalkeeper Hamish, in 2022, but the couple had separated and were believed to be divorcing at the time of his death.

Carlisle
Rob Wright

2.00 Titian
2.30 Mehmas Star
3.00 Ten Clarets
3.30 Here Forever
4.00 Supremissy
4.30 Riddikulus (nb)
5.00 Idyllic

Going: good
Draw: 5f-1m, low numbers best **Racing TV**

2.00 Handicap (£3,229: 1m 1f) (9 runners)
1 (1) 6-604 **TITIAN** 65 (P) J Camacho 8-11-5 **J Loughnane (3)**
2 (4) 61205 **UP THE JAZZ** 13 (C,D) R & P Fahey 5-11-4 **Miss I Clarkson (3)**
3 (6) 33451 **SANAFI ZABEEL** 16 (D) J Goldie 5-11-4 **Miss K Williams**
4 (8) 40500 **PEDRO THE POET** 93 N Richards 5-11-3 **H James (3)**
5 (7) 44354 **EPIDAVROS** 16 (P,C,D) K Scott 5-11-2 **F Robson**
6 (5) 20505 **SPIRIT CATCHER** 17 (BF,D) P Kirby 7-10-12 **D Perrin (3)**
7 (3) 5-000 **EAGLES DREAM** 33 (W) T Davidson 4-10-8 **Mrs T Gundry**
8 (2) 00064 **JEWEL MAKER** 3 (CD) T Easterby 11-10-2 **Miss R Burley**
9 (9) 55204 **ON THE BUBBLE** 23 Gary Rutherford 5-10-0 **Miss K Ruddy**
10-11 Sanafi Zabeel, 5-1 Spirit Catcher, 6-1 Epidavros, 12-1 Jewel Maker, Up The Jazz, 16-1 Titian, On The Bubble, Pedro The Poet, 33-1 Eagles Dream.

Rob Wright's choice: Titian shaped as though returning to form at Beverley **Dangers** Sanafi Zabeel, Spirit Catcher

2.30 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £7,020: 6f) (11)
1 (4) **AUGHAVANNON** S Waugh 9-7 **Amie Waugh (3)**
2 (11) **BENBECULA** K Ryan 9-7 **K Stott**
3 (2) **BLAZING INFERNO** E Bethell 9-7 **D Tudhope**
4 (1) **FIVE YEARS** K R Burke 9-7 **P-L Jamin**
5 (3) **MEHMAS STAR** K R Burke 9-7 **S James**
6 (6) 3403 **OR ANOTHER** 42 (T) K Scott 9-7 **J Hart**
7 (5) 0 **RASLAN** 86 (BF) R & P Fahey 9-7 **D Nolan**
8 (10) 0 **SANKHUM GALAXY** 22 B Haslam 9-7 **O Stammers**
9 (8) 31 **PROSPERITY ANGEL** 20 B Haslam 9-6 **A Mullen**
10 (7) **SARASOTA BLUE BLUE** Sir M Prescott 9-2 **L Morris**
11 (9) 0 **STRIKING FORCE** 48 R & P Fahey 9-2 **B McHugh**
11-4 Mehmas Star, 7-2 Benbecula, 11-2 Blazing Inferno, 8-1 Prosperity Angel, Five Years, Sarasota Blue Blue, 10-1 Raslan, 12-1 Or Another.

Wright choice: Mehmas Star, whose dam was placed in group company, appeals **Dangers** Prosperity Angel, Benbecula

3.00 Nursery (2-Y-O: £5,496: 1m) (5)
1 (1) 423 **TEN CLARETS** 35 (BF) K R Burke 9-9 **P-L Jamin**
2 (4) 21 **KANZI** 19 (D) C Johnston 9-9 **C Shepherd**
3 (5) 341 **BINCIMBAL** 13 Harry Charlton 9-5 **C Rodriguez**
4 (2) 06113 **EMERALD BAY** 21 (B) G Scott 8-11 **P J McDonald**
5 (3) 0530 **AURORA VALKYRIE** 27 K Scott 8-4 **R Elliott (5)**
6-4 Kanzi, 9-4 Bincimbal, 7-2 Ten Clarets, 13-2 Emerald Bay, 20-1 Aurora Valkyrie.

Wright choice: Ten Clarets has been gelded since a fair third at Doncaster; should stay this trip **Danger** Bincimbal

3.30 Handicap (3-Y-O: £5,496: 6f) (10)
1 (9) 0-610 **ROGUE ATTRACTION** 30 (P,CD) E Bethell 9-9 **D Tudhope**
2 (5) 3-100 **INVINCIBLE BOY** 33 (D) R & P Fahey 9-5 **B McHugh**
3 (8) 00-00 **RIKKI TIKI TAVI** 61 K Ryan 9-5 **K Stott**
4 (3) 1-045 **HERE FOREVER** 52 (D) D & N Barron 9-5 **D Nolan**
5 (1) 00430 **GO VINCE GO** 12 (D) T Easterby 9-4 **S B Kirrane**
6 (2) 31 **TIP FOSTER** 83 D & N Barron 9-3 **C Beasley**
7 (6) 63000 **ZARVALI** 13 (P) Roger Fell 9-3 **C Shepherd**
8 (4) 2221 **TOWN QUEEN** 70 (D) K R Burke 9-2 **S James**
9 (7) -0456 **KODY B** 43 (P,D) Craig Lidster 9-0 **P J McDonald**
10 (10) -0030 **TRUST AMY** 41 (D) G Hanmer 8-10 **A Mullen**
6-4 Town Queen, 4-1 Tip Foster, 6-1 Rogue Attraction, 8-1 Here Forever, Go Vince Go, 14-1 Zarvali, Invincible Boy, 25-1 Kody B, Rikki Tiki Tavi, 33-1 Trust Amy.

Wright choice: Here Forever was fifth in a more competitive race at Ayr **Dangers** Town Queen, Tip Foster

4.00 Handicap (£3,402: 5f) (14)
1 (12) 63600 **IMPRESSOR** 6 (P,D) Phillip Makin 9-9-9 **S James**
2 (8) 0000- **CAPE SOVEREIGN** 315 (W,P,T) R Menzies 4-9-8 **Doubtful**
3 (2) 50165 **BIBENDUM** 22 (V,D) J Camacho 5-9-8 **R Sexton**
4 (1) 00000 **HVAR** 52 (W) J & S Quinn 3-9-7 **J Hart**
5 (7) 40061 **WITHOUT FLAW** 23 (D) Miss T Jackson 5-9-6 **Joanna Mason**
6 (3) 52233 **HARRY MOLE** 19 Steph Hollinshead 4-9-5 **D Costello**
7 (5) 50145 **COTAI STARLIGHT** 16 K Scott 3-9-5 **K Stott**
8 (6) 01004 **OPAL STORM** 3 (P,T,CD) B Rothwell 6-9-4 **F McManoman**
9 (13) 66026 **NEVER DARK** 6 (D) I Jardine 9-9-4 **A Jary (3)**
10 (9) -2113 **CRAFTY SPIRIT** 30 (B,BF,D) J Wainwright 5-9-3 **B McHugh**
11 (10) 03104 **SUPREMISSY** 6 (D) I Jardine 3-9-3 **A Mullen**
12 (14) 25400 **KEEP THE GOLD** 19 (P) M Dods 4-9-3 **C Beasley**
13 (11) 50550 **KYBER CRYSTAL** 6 (P,T,D) R Menzies 7-8-12 **P J McDonald**
14 (4) 56500 **ROYAL DUKE** 3 (P,T,D) R M Smith 5-8-9 **R Elliott (5)**
4-1 Without Flaw, 9-2 Crafty Spirit, 6-1 Supremissy, 7-1 Harry Mole, 8-1 Bibendum, 12-1 Opal Storm, Never Dark, Royal Duke, Impressor.

Wright choice: Supremissy was beaten less than a length when fourth at Hamilton **Dangers** Harry Mole, Keep The Gold

4.30 Handicap (Div I: £3,402: 1m 3f) (10)
1 (4) 1-000 **HILL O RUE** 52 (T,C) K Ryan 4-9-12 **K Stott**
2 (3) 30053 **DR RIO** 15 D Carroll 10-9-11 **Z Wheatley**
3 (2) 33550 **TAYLORMADE LAD** 38 (CD) M Dods 4-9-10 **C Beasley**
4 (6) 2020- **VAMPIRE SLAYER** J160 (P) D Bourke 6-9-9 **D Nolan**
5 (10) 53326 **OFF SPIN** 39 (T) T Easterby 4-9-5 **S B Kirrane**
6 (9) 02122 **HANSTEEN** 23 (BF) J & S Quinn 3-9-3 **J Hart**
7 (7) 41412 **RIDDIKULUS** 12 (B) G Tuer 3-9-0 **O Stammers**
8 (1) 03200 **SPEECHMAN** 23 (B,P) P Kirby 6-8-12 **T Kiely-Marshall (5)**
9 (8) 04445 **STAR OF MARKINCH** 27 Gary Rutherford 10-8-12 **R Elliott (5)**
10 (5) 3-005 **DUE TO SHINE** 27 (P) B Ellison 3-8-4 **F McManoman**
5-2 Hansteen, 3-1 Riddikulus, 9-2 Dr Rio, 11-2 Vampire Slayer, 10-1 Taylormade Lad, Off Spin, 20-1 Hill O Rue, 25-1 others.

Wright choice: Riddikulus, second at Ripon, will relish this return to further **Dangers** Dr Rio, Taylormade Lad

5.00 Handicap (Div II: £3,402: 1m 3f) (9)
1 (9) 65403 **IDYLLIC** 17 (CD) W Storey 5-9-12 **G Fairley**
2 (1) 60200 **RORY'S GOLD** 27 S Waugh 4-9-10 **Amie Waugh (3)**
3 (8) 41334 **ANNANDALE** 45 (BF,D) J Goldie 8-9-10 **Lauren Young (5)**
4 (2) 00504 **LIGHTNING GALAXY** 17 (T) M Dods 4-9-6 **C Beasley**
5 (7) 30-40 **FARABOVE THE LIMIT** 17 Phillip Makin 3-9-3 **S James**
6 (5) 52524 **HEY HAVANA** 8 (BF) G Harker 3-9-2 **P J McDonald**
7 (6) 22032 **FALAISE BLANC** 16 (V) K Scott 4-8-13 **J Dickson (5)**
8 (3) 05400 **ZEBRA STAR** 19 R M Smith 6-8-12 **S B Kirrane**
9 (4) -0555 **ALCANZOR** 12 (B) T Easterby 3-8-4 **F McManoman**
100-30 Falaise Blanc, 7-2 Idyllic, 4-1 Hey Havana, 5-1 Annandale, 6-1 Lightning Galaxy, 14-1 Rory's Gold, Zebra Star, 16-1 Farabove The Limit, 25-1 Alcanzor.

Wright choice: Idyllic shaped as though back in good heart when third at Ayr **Dangers** Lightning Galaxy, Rory's Gold

Lingfield Park
Rob Wright

2.22 Ten Of Clubs
2.52 Please Don't Go
3.22 Black Chiffon
3.52 General Assembly
4.22 Lady Aiyana
4.55 Royal County Glory

Going: standard
Draw: no advantage **Sky Sports Racing**

2.22 Nursery (2-Y-O: £3,664: 1m) (11)
1 (2) 5064 **NO MORE PINO** 8 Charlie Pike 9-9 **S M Levey**
2 (3) 4005 **PRINCE KAMEO** 26 Sir M Prescott 9-8 **J Gilligan**
3 (9) 0003 **TEN OF CLUBS** 17 (P) J Osborne 9-5 **S Osborne**
4 (6) 05230 **HAMDANI MOKHATER** 17 (B) James Horton 9-5 **J Mitchell**
5 (1) 0062 **BOLLENGO BOY** 17 (BF) E J-Houghton 9-4 **C Bishop**
6 (10) 050 **WHISKEY GALORE** 28 M Bell 9-3 **T Marquand**
7 (11) 54314 **MAGICAL LIFE** 10 (D) J S Moore 9-2 **M Ghiani**
8 (7) 066 **KISS CAM** 14 (B) R Hughes 9-2 **C Fallon**
9 (8) 040 **GOBLET** 52 H Morrison 9-1 **R Hornby**
10 (5) 0005 **ALLABOUTTHELUNCH** 17 E Smyth-Osbourne 8-3 **O Tubb**
11 (4) 060 **HAILSTONES IN MAY** 42 R Hughes 8-3 **T Heard**
3-1 No More Pino, 9-2 Bollengo Boy, 5-1 Magical Life, 7-1 Kiss Cam, 8-1 Whiskey Galore, 10-1 Hamdani Mokhater, 12-1 Prince Kameo, Ten Of Clubs.

2.52 Fillies' Stakes (2-Y-O: £6,480: 1m) (5)
1 (3) 0 **BOOMSHAKALAK** 50 Zoe Hawkins 9-2 **C Hutchinson**
2 (1) 032 **KIAH** 26 B Meehan 9-2 **T Marquand**
3 (2) 04 **PLEASE DON'T GO** 15 R Hughes 9-2 **C Fallon**
4 (5) 5 **SCRAPPETALENE** 20 C Johnston 9-2 **R Hornby**
5 (4) 55 **THURITHA** 15 D M Simcock 9-2 **S M Levey**
13-8 Kiah, 5-2 Please Don't Go, 7-2 Thuritha, 4-1 Scrappetalene, 50-1 Boomshakalak.

3.22 Novice Stakes (£5,400: 1m) (7)
1 (1) 1- **ENOCH** 335 J & T Gosden 3-9-11 **W Buick**
2 (3) **IRISH SPRING** K Jewell 4-9-10 **J Haynes**
3 (6) 0 **PANIOLO CREEK** 58 Kieran Burke 5-9-10 **Josephine Gordon**
4 (4) 1-4 **BLACK CHIFFON** 22 A Balding 3-9-6 **R Hornby**
5 (2) 0 **CLASSY NIGHT** 22 Harry Eustace 3-9-4 **Kaiya Fraser**
6 (5) 35 **COLONNADE** 22 (T) S & E Crisford 3-9-4 **J Mitchell**
7 (7) 0- **OPEN TO OFFERS** 295 W Greatrex 3-9-4 **E Greatrex**
4-6 Enoch, 9-4 Black Chiffon, 9-2 Colonnade, 50-1 Classy Night, 66-1 Irish Spring, 100-1 Open To Offers, Paniolo Creek.

3.52 Handicap (£4,187: 5f) (6)
1 (3) 1-000 **DESERT TREASURE** 34 (D) W Haggas 3-9-10 **T Marquand**
2 (6) 3-541 **ISLE OF LISMORE** 65 (V,D) R Cowell 8-9-8 **J Mitchell**
3 (4) 22504 **GENERAL ASSEMBLY** 47 (D) C Hobson 5-9-4 **M Ghiani**
4 (5) 14646 **MICK'S SPIRIT** 52 (T,V,CD) C Allen 8-9-3 **J Gilligan**
5 (2) 04246 **LAZZAR** 13 (C) C Wallis 4-9-3 **R Hornby**
6 (1) 53122 **STYLE KING** 10 (P,BF,C) C Dwyer 4-9-2 **H Davies**
11-8 Isle Of Lismore, 2-1 Style King, 5-1 Desert Treasure, 8-1 General Assembly, 16-1 Mick's Spirit, 25-1 Lazzar.

4.22 Classified Stakes (£3,664: 1m 2f) (14)
1 (10) -0132 **FREEDOM BAY** 24 (P,T) Zoe Hawkins 4-9-9 **C Hutchinson**
2 (5) -2560 **IFTIKHAAR** 124 (V) J R Jenkins 7-9-9 **M Ghiani**
3 (4) 06540 **KAARESS** 24 (V,CD) M Attwater 5-9-9 **K Fox**
4 (9) 00005 **KEV** 15 W Muir & C Grassick 4-9-9 **T Marquand**
5 (1) -6002 **LADY AIYANA** 16 (T) Mrs I G-Leveque 4-9-9 **B Sayette**
6 (11) 00445 **PRIDE EYE** 9 (BF) M Rimell 4-9-9 **R Hornby**
7 (14) 0/443 **ROGERS DREAM** 27 Gihan Arnolda 5-9-9 **Doubtful**
8 (12) 0-650 **SENSEOFENTITLEMENT** 100 (P) P Butler 6-9-9 **J Mitchell**
9 (6) 0-520 **SHARMA D'AMOUR** 110 (C) D Coakley 4-9-9 **G Bass**
10 (13) 00456 **SUNSET IN PARIS** 50 (CD) J R Jenkins 8-9-9 **H Davies**
11 (7) 23400 **TASKHEER** 72 (T,C) G & J Moore 8-9-9 **P Bradley**
12 (3) 0066R **VERSATILE** J7 (BF,D) James Owen 5-9-9 **Josephine Gordon**
13 (2) 04552 **ERNIE MCCREW** 9 J S Moore 3-9-2 **Millie Wonnacott (5)**
14 (8) 30050 **MARYLAND STAR** 24 (H) D Ivory 3-9-2 **J F Egan**
7-2 Freedom Bay, 4-1 Pride Eye, 6-1 Ernie Mccrew, Sharma D'amour, 7-1 Lady Aiyana, Versatile, 14-1 Taskheer, Kev.

4.55 Handicap (3-Y-O: £3,664: 7f) (12)
1 (9) 31502 **ROYAL COUNTY GLORY** 7 (BF,D) Jack Jones 9-9 **C Fallon**
2 (6) 435-6 **MELODICAL** 20 E Walker 9-9 **T Marquand**
3 (8) 04236 **CREDIT FORGEDD IT** 12 S Dow 9-9 **S M Levey**
4 (11) 054-0 **IRISH FUSILIER** 83 G & J Moore 9-9 **R Hornby**
5 (5) 50606 **KING CHERRY** 7 (T) S C Williams 9-6 **M Ghiani**
6 (12) 0-03 **TWILIGHT BABY** 39 G Kelleway 9-6 **S Osborne**
7 (4) 00006 **EBN SABT** 14 (C) B Lund 9-4 **J Doughty**
8 (7) 33306 **REAL GOLD** 14 R Cook & J Bridger 8-11 **J Leavy**
9 (10) 00030 **LESLEY BUCKLEY** 58 (V) S Pearce 8-9 **R Dawson**
10 (3) 606-4 **AUDERE** 28 D Ivory 8-9 **J F Egan**
11 (1) -5600 **POWER CUT** 9 C Banham 8-9 **J Haynes**
12 (2) 06563 **RUIZ** 9 (H) S Dow 8-9 **T Heard**
2-1 Royal County Glory, 5-1 Melodical, 6-1 King Cherry, 8-1 Credit Forgedd It, Ruiz, 12-1 Twilight Baby, Irish Fusilier, 14-1 Power Cut.

Ffos Las
Rob Wright

2.37 Laylaty
3.07 Tumishi
3.37 Macarone
4.07 Last Flight
4.37 Saaffya
5.07 Grand Pier

Going: good, good to firm in places
Draw: 5f-6f, high numbers best **Sky Sports Racing**

2.37 Nursery (2-Y-O: £4,187: 6f) (7)
1 (6) 43246 **RHODES RUNNER** 19 R Beckett 9-9 **R Ryan**
2 (2) 1000 **WILD TERRAIN** 27 (B,D) H Palmer 9-9 **D Muscutt**
3 (7) 031 **DOWNONMAINSTREET** 21 M Bell 9-8 **David Egan**
4 (4) 45122 **TANGO HOTEL** 41 (P,C) G Scott 9-8 **L Wright (3)**
5 (1) 431 **LAYLATY** 26 (D) Harry Charlton 9-7 **L Edmunds**
6 (5) 0005 **MINZAAL TIME** 22 (P) R Hughes 9-3 **F Marsh**
7 (3) 36034 **SEED YA LATER** 10 J Channon 9-2 **K Shoemark**
2-1 Downonmainstreet, 9-4 Laylaty, 5-1 Tango Hotel, 10-1 Wild Terrain, Rhodes Runner, 12-1 Seed Ya Later, Minzaal Time.

3.07 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,400: 6f) (6)
1 (6) 5 **CHANNEL ISLANDS** 47 P Evans 9-7 **D Keenan**
2 (3) **CORBIE ROCK** J Chapple-Hyam 9-7 **R Clutterbuck**
3 (2) 0 **NATIVE CHIEF** 22 J Butler 9-7 **D Egan**
4 (4) 43 **TUMISHI** 33 J Fanshawe 9-7 **D Muscutt**
5 (1) 233 **WAR GAMING** 24 (P) G Scott 9-7 **R Ryan**
6 (5) **DUCHESS OF IMMATIN** G Boughey 9-2 **K Shoemark**
7-4 Duchess Of Immatin, 5-2 War Gaming, 3-1 Tumishi, 6-1 Corbie Rock, 16-1 Native Chief, 50-1 Channel Islands.

3.37 Classified Stakes (£3,454: 6f) (9)
1 (8) 05364 **COAST** 22 (B,D) S Dixon 7-9-9 **K O'Neill**
2 (6) 00606 **DIAMONDSINTHESAND** 30 (CD) A Wintle 9-9-9 **Taryn Langley (5)**
3 (2) 00525 **MACARONE** 18 (D) G Harris 5-9-9 **R Ryan**
4 (4) 4-545 **OUTER EDGE** 42 (D) C Mason 5-9-9 **G Mangan**
5 (3) -5240 **SUNDIATA KEITA** 10 (P) J & R Flint 4-9-9 **Taylor Fisher**
6 (7) 50-52 **DEMETRIS MOUFLON** 80 B Millman 3-9-6 **L Edmunds**
7 (9) 40036 **MAYFLOWER ROCK** 13 D Cunha 3-9-6 **D Egan**
8 (5) 6000 **RIDGER** 14 (T) Ollie Sangster 3-9-6 **S Donohoe**
9 (1) 34345 **ROGUE REBELLION** 18 R Harris 3-9-6 **D Muscutt**
7-2 Demetris Mouflon, 4-1 Sundiata Keita, 5-1 Outer Edge, 6-1 Macarone, 8-1 Mayflower Rock, Diamondsinthesand, 10-1 Rogue Rebellion, 12-1 others.

4.07 Handicap (£3,454: 2m) (9)
1 (6) 00204 **GOOD ONYA MATE** 13 (P) M Bell 4-10-2 **K Shoemark**
2 (3) 3-123 **GOLDEN FLAME** 35 (CD) T Faulkner 8-10-2 **Zoe Lewis (7)**
3 (1) 02443 **LUSAKA** 49 (B,C) J & R Flint 8-10-2 **Taylor Fisher**
4 (8) -6323 **MERRIJIG** 41 (B,D) J Berry 8-10-0 **G Mangan**
5 (9) 05032 **SNEAKY BLINDER** 9 (P) R Stephens 5-9-8 **R Ryan**
6 (4) 04343 **BEAUNE** 9 (P) B J Llewellyn & R Williams 4-9-7 **Doubtful**
7 (7) 04233 **SIMIYANN** 16 (T,V,CD) I Williams 6-9-6 **R Kavanagh (3)**
8 (5) 00533 **LAST FLIGHT** 19 James Horton 3-8-8 **S Donohoe**
9 (2) 0600 **MAKE A SPLASH** 19 (V) T Ward 3-8-2 **K O'Neill**
2-1 Last Flight, 9-2 Lusaka, 11-2 Merrijig, 6-1 Simiyann, Golden Flame, 7-1 Sneaky Blinder, 12-1 Good Onya Mate, 50-1 Make A Splash.

4.37 Maiden Stakes (£6,480: 1m 4f) (6)
1 (1) 42025 **BLUE HERCULES** 19 W Muir & C Grassick 3-9-7 **L Edmunds**
2 (4) 50 **PACIFIC STORM** 69 D Menuisier 3-9-7 **D Egan**
3 (5) 44 **PHANTOM RECON** 69 G Scott 3-9-7 **D Keenan**
4 (3) 030- **WINDAY** J89 (T) E Mullins (Ire) 3-9-7 **R Ryan**
5 (6) 34 **NESWICK** 14 M Tregoning 3-9-2 **D Muscutt**
6 (2) **SAAFFYA** E Walker 3-9-2 **K Shoemark**
2-1 Blue Hercules, 9-4 Winday, 9-2 Phantom Recon, 6-1 Saaffya, 8-1 Neswick, 20-1 Pacific Storm.

5.07 Handicap (£3,454: 1m 2f) (10)
1 (10) 33204 **FAST STEPS** 24 (P,D) B Millman 8-9-13 **C Tucker (7)**
2 (2) 64533 **SYMPHONY'S SONG** 18 I Williams 4-9-11 **R Kavanagh**
3 (3) 22212 **TAKEITORLEAVEIT** 31 (P) J Portman 3-9-9 **D J Murphy (5)**
4 (7) 66343 **REVICH** 41 (V) A Wintle 10-9-9 **Taryn Langley (3)**
5 (8) 5-646 **BRAVE LEADER** 31 (B) T Ward 3-9-7 **L Wright**
6 (9) 41156 **SAHM NAIF** 18 (B,D) James Horton 3-9-6 **Doubtful**
7 (4) 4-062 **GRAND PIER** 71 W Greatrex 3-9-6 **H Vigors (3)**
8 (1) 300-0 **TALES OLD AS TIME** 50 E Smyth-Osbourne 3-9-5 **Ashley Lewis**
9 (5) 06463 **THE ANTHONY GOVER** 16 (P) Dr R Newland 3-9-5 **C Bell**
10 (6) 0-04 **HOTEL CALIFORNIA** 31 D Menuisier 3-9-4 **M Paetel**
9-4 Grand Pier, 5-1 Symphony's Song, 6-1 The Anthony Gover, Revich, 8-1 Hotel California, Fast Steps, 10-1 Takeitorleaveit, 14-1 Brave Leader.

Southwell
Rob Wright

6.00 Cable Beach
6.30 Adelaide Bay
7.00 Mr Noble
7.30 Night Of Gold
8.00 Furturra
8.30 Flash Rascal
9.00 Captain Cairney (nap)

Going: standard
Draw: no advantage **Sky Sports Racing**

6.00 Handicap (Div I: £3,245: 7f) (10)
1 (10) 00321 **HERETIC** 11 (P,T,C) M Herrington 7-9-10(4ex) **D Probert**
2 (4) 6-554 **DUMFRIES** 14 (C,D) R Carr 6-9-9 **JP Sullivan**
3 (6) 00000 **MERESIDE MADNESS** 74 (P,D) S Dixon 5-9-9 **C Howarth (3)**
4 (5) 12360 **CAPTAIN PICKLES** 28 (CD) T Culhane & S Barclay 4-9-8 **B Garritty**
5 (7) 00040 **LORD ABAMA** 17 (P) M Dods 7-9-8 **T Eaves**
6 (9) 56040 **BEAMING LIGHT** 28 D Loughnane 6-9-7 **W Pyle**
7 (3) -5023 **TURBO COMMAND** 98 (CD) Mrs A C Hamilton 9-9-6 **C Hardie**
8 (1) 65060 **PINK SOCKS** 36 (CD) Stephanie Cassidy 7-9-3 **W Carson**
9 (2) 4-304 **CABLE BEACH** 63 (CD) T Tate 5-9-1 **C Lee**
10 (8) 04505 **CAPTAIN KINSELLA** 27 (T,C) J Gallagher 4-9-0 **R Havlin**
13-8 Heretic, 4-1 Turbo Command, 7-1 Cable Beach, 8-1 Dumfries, 10-1 Lord Abama, Beaming Light, 12-1 Captain Pickles, 20-1 Captain Kinsella.

6.30 Handicap (Div II: £3,245: 7f) (10)
1 (9) 40050 **GIVE ME THE NIGHT** 40 (T) M Rimell 4-9-9 **H Crouch**
2 (5) 25264 **ADELAIDE BAY** 33 (BF,D) J Chapple-Hyam 4-9-8 **B Loughnane**
3 (4) 11034 **SHADES OF MAY** 22 (BF,CD) M Usher 6-9-7 **Rose Dawes (5)**
4 (10) -3255 **RESPECTABLE JACK** 113 (B,T,BF) M Crawley 5-9-7 **W Fentiman (3)**
5 (7) 0300- **AL SUIL EILE** 486 (CD) D Shaw 10-9-7 **G Wood**
6 (2) -0555 **FULFORD CROSS** 26 (P,D) D M Simcock 4-9-6 **S De Sousa**
7 (3) 24056 **KING SHARJA** 15 (CD) R Carr 6-9-5 **JP Sullivan**
8 (6) 60535 **MY MATE BEATTIE** 13 (P) S Dixon 4-9-0 **C Howarth (3)**
9 (8) 40340 **STARSHOT** 103 (D) L Mullaney 6-9-0 **A Rawlinson**
10 (1) 6000- **ROYAL JUSTICE** 391 S Dixon 5-9-0 **M Mortensen (5)**
3-1 Adelaide Bay, 9-2 Respectable Jack, 5-1 King Sharja, 11-2 Shades Of May, 8-1 Starshot, 10-1 Fulford Cross, Al Suil Eile, 12-1 Give Me The Night.

7.00 Handicap (£5,154: 7f) (11)
1 (3) -0660 **FOUETTE** 89 (CD) James Horton 4-10-0 **O Orr**
2 (7) 61002 **CARRON** 78 (D) R Carr 4-9-13 **JP Sullivan**
3 (2) 3-233 **MASTER RICHARD** 68 (CD) Mrs A Duffield 7-9-12 **S Gray**
4 (11) 2-130 **PIETRO** 83 (D) J Fanshawe 4-9-10 **J Peate**
5 (5) 06020 **CHALK MOUNTAIN** 15 (T,CD) Zoe Hawkins 6-9-9 **H Crouch**
6 (6) -4151 **DUBLIN BAY** 90 (P,D) Ollie Sangster 3-9-7 **S D Bowen**
7 (1) 21-43 **HAADERR** 26 (T,CD) E Bethell 3-9-6 **B Loughnane**
8 (9) 40110 **KING OF FURY** 8 (CD) M Dods 6-9-6 **T Eaves**
9 (4) 1-232 **MR NOBLE** 33 K R Burke 3-9-6 **C Lee**
10 (10) 50005 **NEW IMAGE** 19 (CD) M Herrington 6-9-5 **D Probert**
11 (8) 31250 **KING'S SCHOOL** 26 (P,T,D) G Tutty 5-9-4 **W Fentiman (3)**
7-2 Mr Noble, 4-1 Dublin Bay, 5-1 Carron, 13-2 Master Richard, 7-1 Haaderr, 8-1 Pietro, 12-1 Chalk Mountain, King Of Fury.

7.30 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £6,281: 7f) (10)
1 (1) **ALFA HOODINI** I Furtado 9-7 **S De Sousa**
2 (7) 3 **EBT'S WARRIOR** 18 W Muir & C Grassick 9-7 **H Crouch**
3 (4) **EL MORJAN** J & T Gosden 9-7 **R Havlin**
4 (10) 0 **GROUND FORCE** 30 James Owen 9-7 **C Howarth (3)**
5 (2) **ICY MOON** I Furtado 9-7 **T Eaves**
6 (6) 35 **MARKET LEADER** 26 K R Burke 9-7 **J Doyle**
7 (9) 00 **NEVERBEATDESWALKER** 43 M Walford 9-7 **J Garritty**
8 (5) **NICAMOO** D Loughnane 9-7 **W Pyle**
9 (8) **NIGHT OF GOLD** G Boughey 9-7 **B Loughnane**
10 (3) 06 **SECANO** 29 Harry Charlton 9-7 **C Lee**
13-8 Night Of Gold, 2-1 Market Leader, 3-1 El Morjan, 14-1 Alfa Hoodini, 16-1 Ebt's Warrior, 20-1 Icy Moon, 50-1 Nicamoo, Secano.

8.00 Nursery (2-Y-O: £5,234: 6f) (7)
1 (3) 21240 **FURTURRA** 7 (D) T Easterby 9-9 **D Fentiman**
2 (4) 126 **PERSIAN LAND** 72 (D) P Evans 9-7 **P Cosgrave**
3 (6) 33 **NOUR** 33 K R Burke 9-5 **C Lee**
4 (7) 52241 **TOO MANY SPIRITS** 35 (CD) T Coyle & K Wood 9-4 **O Orr**
5 (1) 444 **STATTEN ISLAND** 34 K Ryan 9-4 **T Eaves**
6 (2) 02124 **LORD RAGNAR** 21 (BF) E Dunlop 9-3 **B Loughnane**
7 (5) 0061 **TRUST YOURSELF** 10 (D) J Tate 8-10(6ex) **S De Sousa**
5-2 Nour, 100-30 Trust Yourself, 5-1 Too Many Spirits, 13-2 Furturra, 7-1 Statten Island, Lord Ragnar, 10-1 Persian Land.

8.30 Handicap (£3,917: 6f) (11)
1 (10) -0166 **AZURE ZAIN** 38 (D) R & P Fahey 4-10-0 **W Fentiman (3)**
2 (9) -0000 **BERGERAC** 16 (P,C,D) K Ryan 8-9-13 **T Eaves**
3 (1) 50012 **MIRACULOUS** 6 (CD) T Easterby 4-9-13 **D Fentiman**
4 (6) 11135 **FENLANDER** 20 (D) Mrs P Sly 5-9-12 **C Howarth (3)**
5 (11) 50034 **JENEVER** 16 (V,CD) Jessica Macey 7-9-11 **G Wood**
6 (8) 32310 **FLASH RASCAL** 12 (D) D Loughnane 3-9-9 **S De Sousa**
7 (7) 00205 **BRAZEN IDOL** 45 (D) J Ryan 7-9-8 **P Cosgrave**
8 (5) 10003 **ESCAPE PLAN** 9 (T,D) T Ward 3-9-4 **D Probert**
9 (4) 55331 **MASSIMO BLUE** 11 (CD) D Cunha 4-9-4 **B Loughnane**
10 (2) 26002 **DAYTONA LADY** 10 (P,CD) R Carr 6-9-2 **JP Sullivan**
11 (3) 4023/ **CRYPTO QUEST** 700 (D) S Dixon 7-8-9 **C Hardie**
3-1 Massimo Blue, 11-2 Fenlander, 6-1 Miraculous, 8-1 Escape Plan, Jenever, 10-1 Flash Rascal, Daytona Lady, Azure Zain.

9.00 Handicap (£3,195: 1m 6f) (5)
1 (2) -0053 **LORDSBRIDGE GREY** 49 (B) S Woods 4-10-2 **S De Sousa**
2 (5) -0462 **CURRUMBIN** 13 (H,CD) Michael Keady 5-9-13 **C Lee**
3 (4) 03106 **NANNY PARK** 19 Sara Ender 4-9-12 **J Peate**
4 (3) 20251 **CAPTAIN CAIRNEY** 29 (P) W Muir & C Grassick 3-9-4 **D Probert**
5 (1) 24104 **WORLINGTON** 28 (P,T) G Boughey 3-9-3 **B Loughnane**
9-4 Worlington, 5-2 Captain Cairney, 3-1 Currumbin, 9-2 Lordsbridge Grey, 12-1 Nanny Park.

Newton Abbot
Rob Wright

4.42 St Just In Time
5.12 Better Off Alone
5.42 Buxted Reel
6.12 Gore Point
6.42 My Girl Katie
7.12 McGregors Charge
7.42 Donnie Azoff

Going: good, good to firm in places
Sky Sports Racing

4.42 Maiden Hurdle (£5,446: 2m 2f 110yd) (6)
1 342/3 **ST JUST IN TIME** 12 (T) Harry Derham 6-11-4 **P O'Brien**
2 1-2P4 **WAIT AT THE GATE** 42 D Bridgwater 7-11-4 **B J Powell**
3 232 **IWANTTOBREAKFREE** 36 (T) D Skelton 4-11-0 **Doubtful**
4 540-5 **NIGHTFLYER** 77 (P) J & A O'Neill 4-11-0 **J O'Neill Jr**
5 50-44 **MARIA MES** 45 J Snowden 5-10-11 **G Sheehan**
6 325-3 **MORISSETTE** 116 D Summersby 6-10-11 **B Carver**
4-5 St Just In Time, 7-2 Nightflyer, 6-1 Maria Mes, 7-1 Wait At The Gate, 16-1 Morissette.

5.12 Handicap Chase (£4,225: 3m 2f) (5)
1 -1253 **PREMIER FANTASY** 39 (W,T) Nick Scholfield 7-12-0 **J Quinlan**
2 P34P- **BETTER OFF ALONE** 165 (P) M Keighley 7-12-0 **F Keighley (5)**
3 5-114 **KNIGHTSBRIDGE** 42 (P,T,BF) J & A O'Neill 6-11-9 **J O'Neill Jr**
4 24-1P **LYNSEY LARUE** 75 (T) Mrs C Williams 7-10-6 **C Ring**
5 P-453 **FLASHY BOY** 7 (T) R L Llewellyn 9-10-2 **C Price**
6-4 Knightsbridge, 3-1 Premier Fantasy, 7-2 Flashy Boy, 6-1 Better Off Alone, 10-1 Lynsey Larue.

5.42 Handicap Hurdle (£3,961: 2m 1f) (7)
1 U000- **RUN AWAY JOE** 224 F O'Brien 6-11-12 **T Broughton (3)**
2 6-023 **BUXTED REEL** F19 T Lacey 7-11-7 **S Sheppard**
3 0-130 **MOST WANTED** 40 (P) D Bridgwater 8-11-6 **B J Powell**
4 -5355 **LINDEN LANE** 39 Mrs C Williams 6-11-4 **Miss E Williams (7)**
5 4-06P **PIVOTAL DAYS** 36 (P,T) S Hosie 4-11-3 **E Collier (5)**
6 4-246 **ASK PETER** 39 (T) A Honeyball 7-11-1 **J Robottom (10)**
7 405-4 **ESTATE PLANNING** 72 (P) B J Llewellyn & R Williams 5-11-1 **B R Jones**
15-8 Buxted Reel, 4-1 Most Wanted, Ask Peter, 9-2 Linden Lane, 6-1 Estate Planning, 20-1 Run Away Joe, 33-1 Pivotal Days.

6.12 Handicap Chase (£13,202: 2m) (6)
1 26-44 **BREAKING COVER** 39 (T,CD) A Honeyball 8-12-0 **C Bament (5)**
2 P-645 **CENTARA** 39 (T,CD) P Nicholls 8-11-12 **P Hanlon (5)**
3 1-212 **OBSESSEDWITHYOU** 39 (D) J Snowden 7-11-10 **G Sheehan**
4 21111 **GORE POINT** 5 (T,CD) A Honeyball 6-11-9(7ex) **S Twiston-Davies**
5 0-P23 **ICE IN THE VEINS** 58 S-J Davies 6-10-12 **J Best**
6 P2-21 **GOWER PRINCE** 12 (H,D) J & A O'Neill 8-10-7 **R McLernon**
11-8 Gore Point, 3-1 Gower Prince, 7-2 Obsessedwithyou, 8-1 Breaking Cover, 10-1 Centara, 33-1 Ice In The Veins.

6.42 Handicap Hurdle (£4,489: 3m 2f 105yd) (7)
1 4-314 **FINAL ENTRY** 42 (T,V,CD) D Pipe 5-12-0 **Rian Corcoran (5)**
2 14-14 **JACK THE SAVAGE** 53 (P,T,D) L Horsfall 9-11-11 **S Bowen**
3 13-11 **MY GIRL KATIE** 5 G Harris 9-11-8 **C Ring**
4 56-06 **TOUCHWOODEXPRESS** 57 (V,CD) N & W Twiston-Davies 7-11-4 **S Twiston-Davies**
5 30/36 **ALBERTS BAY** 92 Miss J Du Plessis 9-10-13 **J Best**
6 50200 **MAN OH MAN** 5 (B) D Summersby 7-10-10 **B Carver**
7 -4340 **BLUE SIAM** 4 (P) S Hosie 4-10-5 **E Collier (5)**
5-4 My Girl Katie, 3-1 Final Entry, 4-1 Jack The Savage, 10-1 Blue Siam, 14-1 Touchwoodexpress, 20-1 Alberts Bay, Man Oh Man.

7.12 Handicap Chase (£5,809: 2m 5f) (5)
1 PP-10 **QUICK SHARPENER** 57 (W,T,D) J Snowden 9-12-1 **G Sheehan**
2 3111U **LADY KARA** 58 (H,T) Dr R Newland 5-12-0 **C Hammond**
3 21211 **THICKTHORN TOM** 42 (B,T,CD) D Skelton 6-11-11 **H Skelton**
4 -P411 **IT'S A BREEZE** 39 (H,T,CD) P Nicholls 7-11-10 **P Hanlon (5)**
5 0-542 **MCGREGORS CHARGE** 12 (T,BF) P Gundry 8-10-2 **B Godfrey**
13-8 It's A Breeze, 7-4 Thickthorn Tom, 9-2 Lady Kara, 10-1 Quick Sharpener, McGregors Charge.

7.42 Handicap Hurdle (£5,281: 2m 2f 110yd) (4)
1 5-212 **DONNIE AZOFF** 46 (T,CD) J Snowden 10-12-0 **Isabelle Ryder**
2 1111P **BEORMA** 2 (T,BF) D Skelton 7-11-9 **Doubtful**
3 0051/ **KING OF THE BRONX** F373 S Hosie 5-11-3 **E Collier (5)**
4 6-12P **ELLERTON** 45 (W,T,BF,C) J Tizzard 6-11-0 **B J Powell**
Evens Donnie Azoff, 6-4 Ellerton, 5-1 King Of The Bronx.

Yesterday's racing results

Catterick
Going: Good (good to firm in places)

2.15 (5f) 1, **Mugheer** (C Lee, 1-1); 2, Shaniko (6-4); 3, Scottys Rocket (11-1). 8 ran. NR: Romidijo. sh, 2¼l. K R Burke.

2.45 (7f 6yd) 1, **Lady Gormire** (Connor Beasley, 6-5 fav); 2, Soca Star (7-2); 3, Moonlight Melody (4-1). 8 ran. 3l, 1½l. M Dods.

3.15 (5f 212yd) 1, **Battenburg Belle** (Jason Hart, 5-2); 2, Barmyblade (7-2); 3, Run This Way (5-2). 5 ran. NR: Overbudget. nk, 4l. R Menzies.

3.45 (1m 5f 192yd) 1, **Niffler** (L Morris, 4-11 fav); 2, Mr Withington (11-1); 3, Fairydale (10-1). 8 ran. ¾l, ¾l. Sir Mark Prescott.

4.15 (5f) 1, **Novamay** (Rhys Elliott, 9-2); 2, Canaria Queen (9-2); 3, Call Margot (6-1). 8 ran. NR: Canon's House, Marching Mac. 3l, ¾l. M Dods.

4.52 (7f 6yd) 1, **Lanarra** (J P Sullivan, 7-2); 2, Ridgemaster (17-2); 3, Without Delay (5-2). 13 ran. nk, 1l. R M Smith.

Placepot: £15.20
Quadpot: £8.80

Newbury
Going: Good to Firm

4.10 (7f) 1, **Mobadir** (K Shoemark, 5-2); 2, Primal (13-8); 3, Magi Melchior (22-1). 14 ran. 1¼l, 1l. E Walker.

4.45 (6f 110yd) 1, **Crusherman** (D Egan, 11-4 fav); 2, Kicking Bear (14-1); 3, Flick Of An Eye (15-2). 10 ran. ¾l, nk. B J Meehan.

5.20 (6f 110yd) 1, **Scythe** (Saffie Osborne, 7-1); 2, Kingdom Of Kush (85-40); 3, Uncle Zello (40-1). 8 ran. NR: Saturn Star. 27½l, 5½l. B J Meehan.

5.55 (6f) 1, **Starburster** (Saffie Osborne, 5-1); 2, Bidsta (9-2); 3, Somers Isles (2-1). 10 ran. NR: Letter To Hermione. hd, 2l. R Spencer.

6.30 (1m) 1, **Abundant** (S M Levey, 7-4; **Rob Wright's nap**); 2, Cloud Forest (11-2); 3, Zatsgood (6-1). 12 ran. 17½l, hd. T Ward.

7.00 (7f) 1, **Lion of Mali** (D Egan, 6-4 fav); 2, Cool Molly (15-2); 3, Bold Shout (9-4). 6 ran. 2¼l, nk. J R Fanshawe.

7.30 (1m 2f) 1, **Magical Merlot** (D Egan, 4-1); 2, Empirical (3-1); 3, Edwin Hubble (7-4). 7 ran. NR: Fans Favourite, Magnatura. ½l, 2½l. E A L Dunlop.

Placepot: £25.10 **Quadpot: £6.70**

Wolverhampton
Going: Standard

2.00 (5f 21yd) 1, **Sixcor** (Tom Kiely-Marshall, 4-1); 2, Fancy Dancer (11-2); 3, Sub Thirteen (5-4). 6 ran. ½l, 1¼l. Miss L A Perratt.

2.30 (6f 20yd) 1, **My Maria** (Gina Mangan, 6-4); 2, Lovely Dark Angel (5-4); 3, Reddy (18-1). 11 ran. ½l, 3½l. A Watson.

3.00 (6f 20yd) 1, **Miracleoftheandes** (Edward Greatrex, 33-1); 2, Campenaerts (100-30); 3, Royal Accord (13-2). 8 ran. NR: Guernsey Angel. 1½l, 2¼l. W Greatrex.

3.30 (1m 5f 219yd) 1, **Boilermaker** (David Probert, 1-1 fav); 2, The Craftymaster (5-1); 3, Kingdom Of Stars (4-1). 7 ran. 2¼l, 1½l. Harry Charlton.

4.00 (1m 4f 51yd) 1, **Lawmans Blis** (Liam Wright, 14-1); 2, Raise The Stakes (14-1); 3, Spaceage Love Song (11-2). 11 ran. 37½l, nk. Jessica Macey.

4.35 (1m 142yd) 1, **Shamacid** (David Probert, 5-1); 2, Rogue Officer (50-1); 3, Book Of Life (4-1 fav). 12 ran. ½l, hd. S Woods.

5.10 (1m 142yd) 1, **Zizania Du Mazet** (Christian Howarth, 18-1); 2, Zayin Sentinel (9-2); 3, Mobaasher (5-2). 8 ran. ½l, ½l. C Wallis.

Placepot: £157.40
Quadpot: £71.10

Kempton Park
Going: Standard/slow

6.20 (1m) 1, **Al Wathba** (W Buick, 4-7 fav); 2, Pure Concept (16-1); 3, Wykehurst Park (33-1). 8 ran. 1l, 27½l. C Appleby.

6.51 (7f) 1, **Kaindy** (Ray Dawson, 2-9); 2, Sea Brave (11-4); 3, Talking Bear (50-1). 7 ran. 3¼l, 2½l. R Varian.

7.21 (7f) 1, **Afraj** (W Buick, 11-1); 2, Merry (7-4); 3, Ghisa (7-2). 9 ran. nk, nk. J & T Gosden.

7.51 (1m 3f 219yd) 1, **Gloryous** (William Carson, 13-2); 2, Aphrodite Spirit (10-1); 3, Bint Kilfrush (2-1 fav). 8 ran. sh, sh. J A Osborne.

8.21 (6f) 1, **Bintaryana** (Cieren Fallon, 5-1); 2, Kolkata Knight (12-1); 3, Wezzeer (11-4). 11 ran. ½l, nk. W J Knight.

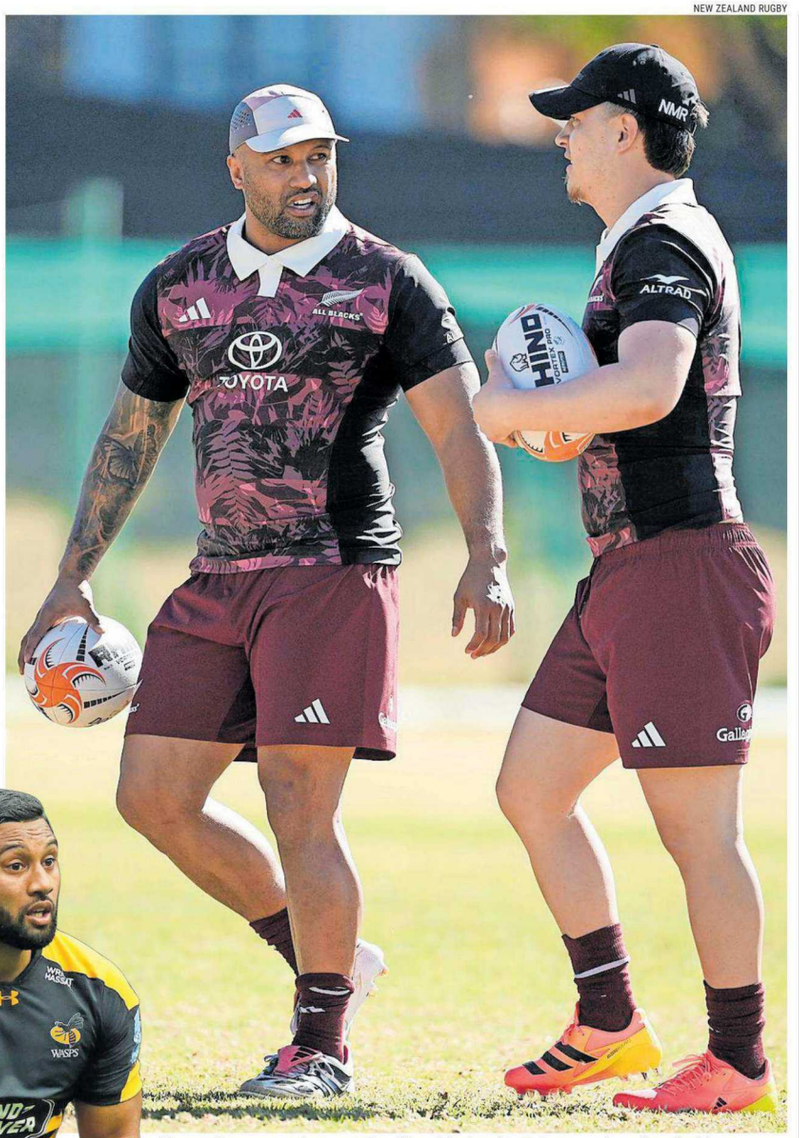
8.51 (1m 3f 219yd) 1, **Madjid** (Lewis Edmunds, 100-30); 2, Cosmo Brown (13-2); 3, Evening Fades (13-2). 11 ran. 4¼l, 3½l, Harry Charlton.

Placepot: £13.40 **Quadpot :£10.20**

Sopoaga: I wanted to quit rugby at Wasps — it was so cold and gloomy

Kiwi fly half tells **Alex Lowe** about being drafted into All Blacks training, his ill-fated time in England and why his kids can't play for Red Roses

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY



Above, Sopoaga takes part in a New Zealand training session ahead of last Saturday's first Test. Left, in action for Wasps during his difficult spell in England

Lima Sopoaga has come to South Africa with his boots. The former Wasps and All Blacks fly half cannot bring himself to retire formally. Last season he made a surprise comeback in New Zealand's domestic competition after a chance encounter in a pub with Waikato's head coach led to him signing a symbolic $1 contract.

But the last thing Sopoaga, 35, expected upon arrival in Johannesburg was to lace up that old pair of Adidas boots so he could train with the All Blacks four days before their victory over the Springboks in the first Test.

Out here to work for NZ Rugby and Sky Sports NZ in his burgeoning role as a social media and television personality, Sopoaga had joined the All Blacks' backroom staff to help set up the Tuesday training session — filling a few water bottles, laying out some cones and generally keeping himself busy after a 25-hour journey from Auckland.

"I landed at 6am, dropped my bags at the hotel and went with the advance party," Sopoaga says. "They said to me, 'What size is your uniform?' I was like, 'What do you mean?' They said they needed numbers for training.

"It was pretty cool. I joined in full training. I was definitely five yards behind the pace but I can catch a ball, I can run and be a body, just help as much as I can.

"Will Jordan came up to me after the game and said, 'Thank you for stepping up this week and helping us.' I was like, 'Bro, I would have done it every day of the week.'"

I tell Sopoaga the story of Shane Williams being called up from his commentary gig with talkSPORT to play for the 2013 British & Irish Lions against the ACT Brumbies. "I don't think that is going to happen," he says, laughing. "I'm happy if they call me up again for training. But when we do contact, I prefer to just stand on the sidelines."

Sopoaga joined Wasps in 2018. He had won Super Rugby with the Highlanders and as a 16-cap All Black was recruited as a marquee signing to replace Danny Cipriani. But the relationship with Wasps turned sour pretty quickly. He failed to find the connection he craves. By the time his contract ended in 2021 Sopoaga had long been ready to quit the sport. There was blame on both sides, he says.

"I know I made mistakes. I went over there a little bit naive. If I had my time again I would have gone there with a different mindset. I would take my skills and sprinkle them into their system and not try and make their system work around me.

"I was like, 'If you're going to pay me all this cash, you might as well play the game I want to play.' But I think that's the wrong mindset. You sprinkle in your little bits of gold around the English game. I wish I could go back and change things. I didn't allow myself to fit in.

"Some of my relationships with people at the club were a bit fractured. I have had my reflection on that, and how I could have dealt with my relationships better with coaches. And, you know, I think I'm a better person for it.

"It was an extremely difficult time. At one point I wanted to give up the game and not play rugby any more. I didn't really enjoy it. I went there with a young family. My daughter was ten months old. To be honest, it's f***ing dark and gloomy there. I know it gets cold in New Zealand but [this was different]. It gets to your bones, bro.

"I knew it was bad when I rang my grandmother and she was like, 'Are you sick?' She had probably seen all the energy sucked out of my eyes. We went through Covid and all that shit. We were there by ourselves.

"Sometimes people forget those things. They are like, 'He's a professional, he earns his money.' But we still have the problems that everyday people have. Just because you make heaps of money doesn't mean you're immune to these things. I also feel like the club let the players down."

All Prem players were forced to take a pay cut during Covid as clubs battled for survival. Wasps eventually drowned, going under in 2022, a year after Sopoaga had left. "The club was in a bad place before I got there. When your house isn't in order from the top down, things don't look great," he says.

"Look at how the All Blacks have turned things around in such a short time. The house is in order from top down [since Dave Rennie took over as head coach, with Don Tricker and Conrad Smith running the high-performance programme].

"We had gifted players at Wasps but the house wasn't in order. It was pretty sad [that the club went bust]. That's a historic club that should still be around. A lot of guys lost jobs — and not just players."

Life in Leamington Spa was not all bad. Sopoaga had two more daughters while at Wasps. Future Red Roses? "Over my dead body," he says. He and Miriam were married in England, with 30 guests invited to the house including Billy Searle, now starring for Leicester Tigers, and Malakai Fekitoa.

"It did rain, though, for f***'s sake," Sopoaga says. "I cherish those friendships. I thought Billy should have been given an England shirt last season. I am proud to have seen his growth and become a friend of his. He took me back to his place in Okehampton. I had a few too many orange juices that day. He always says, 'You got oakeyed, bro.' I need to go and run that back, man.

"I always wanted to use rugby as an avenue to see the world, to change my outlook on life. Travel, it changes your life and turns you into a storyteller. England grew me in ways that I wouldn't have grown. "

Sopoaga rediscovered his spark for rugby after Miriam urged him to give the sport one more shot and he spent the two most enjoyable years of his career in Lyon. "You can't fake connection. You can't fake culture. You can't fake a team being real with each other," he says. "And that's what I believe the All Blacks have really got right now."

Rennie, the first New Zealand head coach of Pasifika heritage, has transformed the All Blacks on and off the field since taking charge in March. He replaced Scott Robertson, who struggled with communication and was dismissed after losing the dressing room.

Rennie's previous Test role with Australia ended when he was sacked before the 2023 World Cup so Eddie Jones could return for an ill-fated second spell in charge of the Wallabies.

"Rennie has had to walk through the fire. What they did to him in Australia was disgraceful," Sopoaga says. "Yet he's walked in here, head held high and [after] four games together the team's back in the No1 spot. That's the influence of empowering the people around you, making your people feel loved.

"And that's probably Dave Rennie's greatest asset. If people feel loved, they'll run through a brick wall for you."

Sopoaga could see that connection at three key points of New Zealand's 33-16 first Test win over the Springboks: their defensive stand just before half-time, regaining the lead just after the interval and then turning the momentum of the scrum battle, and the game as a whole, by winning a penalty under their own posts with 25 minutes remaining.

"That screams connection," he says. "That screams, 'I would do anything for my brother, I would do anything for this team.' I've seen that for weeks. I said, 'We're going to win this thing 2-1 in South Africa [never mind what happens in the fourth Test in Baltimore].' I believe this team believe they can do the unthinkable."

The battle for the All Blacks No10 jersey has taken a fascinating twist with Richie Mo'unga's return from Japan to compete with Ruben Love. Sopoaga believes their competition will only drive further improvement in the All Blacks through to next year's World Cup.

"Ruben has more than earned his No1 spot," Sopoaga says. "But Richie has said, 'I'm here to be the best.' They're going to compete. All of them want that jersey. That can enhance the team and enhance the jersey and enhance the legacy.

"Richie's got all the skills in the bag. He's got big-game technique. He wants all the smoke when the pressure's on. You can't buy aura. And Ruben came through the litmus test last Saturday at Ellis Park. He walked into the fire and came out. He was brilliant."

The All Blacks also have Beauden Barrett and the promising young fly half Josh Jacomb on tour. Sopoaga would not be eligible for the All Blacks even in an emergency, having switched allegiance to Samoa for the 2023 World Cup. But he is ready to fill in at training whenever the All Blacks need him. Have boots, will travel.

South Africa v New Zealand
Second Test
DHL Stadium, Cape Town
Saturday, 4.10pm
TV: Sky Sports Action

Hunter Bell: I was lost in my 20s — now it's my superpower

Matt Lawton

Chief Sports Correspondent, Zurich

Georgia Hunter Bell is describing what she regards as her "superpower" and how it is the product of her own unique journey through sport.

It is because she spent five years away from elite middle-distance running, broken physically as well as mentally after suffering so many injuries while at college in the US, that she is so able to cherish what she has now.

"I think 'cherish' is a great word," she said yesterday in Zurich. "I look back at where I was in my mid-twenties, watching the Tokyo Olympics from my sofa, feeling just very lost. I wasn't excited for life. I was just going through the motions of a day-to-day existence. Now I'm so excited for my life, of what I have as an athlete, I sometimes find it hard to sleep at night. I'm honestly like a kid at Christmas; I can't wait for tomorrow."

Tonight's race happens to be one of the most eagerly anticipated on the athletics calendar. Keely Hodgkinson is missing because of a hamstring issue but Hunter Bell goes up against Audrey Werro, the 22-year-old Swiss sensation who beat the Olympic champion to European gold in Birmingham this month, and Femke Broeders-Bol in an 800m contest that might just join a long list of world records that have been set at the Weltklasse meeting. "Every Diamond League is run at world record pace these days," Hunter Bell says. "In this one I think the pacemaker has been asked to go through the bell in 55.5."

That would certainly give this hugely talented generation of athletes a shot at the oldest record of the lot; Jarmila Kratochvilova's mark of 1min 53.28sec, set in Munich back in 1983.

But Hunter Bell is someone who relishes rather than fears the opportunity to be involved in such an encounter, because at 32 she feels so fortunate to be enjoying a second crack at this.

"I still can't believe this is my life," she says. "I can't tell you how cool it feels to be here in this position. I love every second of it. I love the feeling of racing. I love walking out into the stadium. I love not knowing what's going to happen. We're all going to be pushing ourselves to the limit, but we don't know how it is going to fall. If I win, amazing. But I also know it's possible I could finish fifth and still run a personal best. I hope I don't come last, of course, but I think I have this healthy perspective because of my past. It is my kind of superpower.

"This race will be fun. I feel I have no pressure. Honestly, I may struggle to sleep tonight. It's just such a unique thing. When I was working [in tech sales] I might wake up and wonder how I was going to get through the day. Now I wake up and it's training, or racing, and I just embrace it."

It has enabled her to make a smooth transition from an underdog, and the lesser-known but still gifted member of Hodgkinson's training group, to a serious championship contender in her own right. At 30, she crowned a quite brilliant comeback season by snatching an Olympic bronze medal over 1,500m in Paris. A year later, she took World Championship silver over two laps, dipping ahead of Hodgkinson.

With the clock ticking faster than it perhaps does for younger athletes, Hunter Bell has attacked this year very much like a woman making up for lost time. It is not quite four seasons in one day but take gold in next month's Ultimate Championships and it will amount to four in a single year.

After all, she has already followed a first world indoor title over 1,500m in March with Commonwealth gold over the shorter distance and that commanding European Championship display over the metric mile in Birmingham this month.

Now that Faith Kipyegon has ruled herself out for the remainder of the season with injury, Hunter Bell would probably go into the 1,500m in Budapest as favourite. On form, she is the best in the world. But the 800m was the event in which she excelled as a teenager and the level of competition clearly appeals.

"I've got to make a decision on Friday," she says. "So it's all going to come down to how [tonight's race] goes. Right now I really don't know."

Whatever she decides, the burden of expectation will not be a factor. Hunter Bell stands alongside Hodgkinson, Josh Kerr and Amy Hunt — who goes up against Julien Alfred and Melissa Jefferson-Wooden in a fiercely competitive 100m in Zurich — as British athletes who enjoy the attention their success is generating.

"I've noticed a change, particularly since the Europeans in Birmingham," she says. "I might occasionally get spotted but now it's when I'm on the Tube or shopping at Tesco. And that's nice, because it shows we're getting more recognition as a sport."

Recently she was recognised as she was about to embark on what she calls a tempo session; a series of 1km efforts in Battersea Park. "I was just about to start warming up when I heard a voice go, 'Hi, Georgia?' And it was Jimmy Whelan, the former pro cyclist who's now become an elite distance runner; he ran 61 minutes on his half-marathon debut.

"We had connected on social media but he just offered to help me out that day. 'Do you want me to lead you out?' he asked. And I was, like, 'Great, if you can do a few reps with me that would be brilliant.' I think it was pretty easy for him."

Hunter Bell is sad not to have Hodgkinson here racing too. "It's always harder when you have to watch your team-mates running," she says. "But I stayed with Keely earlier this week when I was training up in Manchester and she will be back soon. She wants to race."

As does Hunter Bell. "The hardest thing about being an athlete is getting your head right," she says. "You need a bulletproof mind, that's something I've really worked on this year. I've won 14 of my 16 races this year and I feel like I have a race strategy that works.That also enables me to feel very calm, chilled and focused."

ADAM VAUGHAN/EPA

Diamond League
Zurich
BBC3 from 7pm, women's 800m at 8.41pm BST

Hunter Bell won 1,500m European gold in Birmingham and will run against Werro and Broeders-Bol in the 800m tonight

Sport Carabao Cup second round

Sávio makes start on De Zerbi's target

Tottenham Hotspur *Moore 41, Solanke 45, Danso 67, Sávio 82, Davies 85*	**5**
Charlton Athletic *Jones 87*	**1**

ELLI BIRCH/IPS/SHUTTERSTOCK

Sávio came off the bench to mark his Tottenham Hotspur debut with a goal a day after the Brazilian winger completed his £75 million move from Manchester City

James Gheerbrant

New name, new man? The winger formerly known as Savinho showed he could be the new prince of Tottenham Hotspur Stadium with a goal and an assist on debut as Tottenham got back on track with a routine Carabao Cup victory against Championship opposition.

Roberto de Zerbi had called Sávio a "top player who just has to improve his finishing", and after this ideal start he revealed that he and his new £75 million signing had agreed on a target. "We put the [target] at 10, 12 goals [this season], because we need 10, 12 goals from our wingers," De Zerbi said. "Last season, the number of goals from that position were not enough to compete."

Having scored just seven times in 84 appearances for Manchester City, Sávio took only 11 minutes after coming on as a second-half substitute to register his first for Spurs. Three minutes later, he added an assist which was really all his own work, scurrying back and forth in the box before his shot was deflected in by an unwitting Ben Davies. Tottenham's reward for this comprehensive win is an away tie against Liverpool in the third round.

The 3-0 defeat by Brentford in Spurs' opening Premier League game was notable for the underwhelming performances of the new signings, but they fared much better here. Jan Paul van Hecke had an assured game in central defence and Mateus Fernandes was quietly influential in midfield.

Mikey Moore, the 19-year-old academy-reared winger whose opportunities could be threatened by the arrival of Sávio, also had a strong game, chipping in with a goal-and-assist double of his own. At four minutes apart, it was only slightly less speedy than Sávio's.

For 40 minutes, it was a tight game, and there were moments of unease for Spurs. Lucas Bergvall, somewhat under the microscope after a poor performance at Brentford, picked up a yellow card for a rash challenge on the edge of the area, and the best save of the opening half-hour was made by Antonin Kinsky, who flew to his left to parry a well-struck drive by the Charlton captain Greg Docherty.

Charlton could not make their period of ascendancy count though, and after Moore's opener Spurs took over. It was a fine goal too, though not one that Charlton will watch back without frustration: Moore dropped a shoulder and cut in off the right, Millenic Alli totally lost his footing, and the pace of the shot seemed to surprise the goalkeeper Tiernan Brooks, whose gloves it burst through.

It didn't take them long to double their lead. Though Moore was credited with the assist, it came from a ricochet inside a crowded penalty area, the ball spinning kindly into the path of Dominic Solanke, who tucked it away.

Playing with confidence, Moore continued to excel after the break: he showed magical feet to jink away from three players in the box, but his low delivery did not find a white shirt. Mathys Tel was also in the mood, and he connected well with an acrobatic effort from an Archie Gray cross, though not quite well enough to trouble Brooks. Gray then had a low angled shot saved.

Kevin Danso headed the third from Fernandes's lateral free kick, just two minutes after coming on. Charlton's best chance to get back into the game came from a counter, substitute Miles Leaburn running clear on Kinsky, who produced a great save to thwart him.

From then on, it was the Sávio show. His goal and assist came from his willingness to run at players. The goal in particular was memorable: he beat Nathan Asiimwe and Alan Mwamba on a gliding run infield and rifled a low shot past Brooks from the edge of the area, before sliding on his knees and miming the chatter of critics with his fingers.

Charlton lost both members of their starting centre-back pairing within the first 15 minutes: Billy Koumetio hobbled off, and Collins Sichenje departed on a stretcher, both with serious-looking injuries.

Nathan Jones, their manager, who had seen his team win their first two Championship fixtures, described it as an "absolute disaster" and "a game we really didn't need".

"Everything we were going to go for [in the transfer market] we're now not able to," he added, "because we have got to replace now."

Tottenham Hotspur (4-3-3): A Kinsky — A Gray, J-P van Hecke (M Van de Ven 64min), B Davies, D Udogie (P Porro 65) — L Bergvall, R Bentancur (K Danso 65), M Fernandes — M Moore, D Solanke (Sávio 71), M Tel (L Williams-Barnett 78). **Booked** Bergvall.
Charlton (4-2-3-1): T Brooks — N Asiimwe, C Sichenje (D McNamara 15), B Koumetio (L Jones 15), I Mesík — T Ouma (A Mwamba 66), G Docherty — R Apter, H Knibbs (M Leaburn 66), M Alli (J Rankin-Costello 66) — M Mbick. **Booked** Apter.
Referee A Herczeg.

Third-round draw

Crystal Palace v Middlesbrough, Manchester United v Brighton, Manchester City v Norwich, Sunderland v Hull, Ipswich v Arsenal, Coventry v Aston Villa, Bournemouth v Lincoln, Liverpool v Tottenham, Chelsea or Luton v Leeds United, Millwall v Newcastle, Fleetwood v Sheffield United, Everton v Wolverhampton Wanderers, Leyton Orient v Bradford, Reading v Brentford, Peterborough v Barnsley, West Ham v Fulham or AFC Wimbledon.
Ties to be played across weeks commencing September 7 and 14

Uefa tells Infantino to preserve World Cup sell-off plan material

CONTINUED FROM BACK

obligations arise independently of any internal retention policy you or your organisation maintain and supersede any routine document destruction or deletion policies that would otherwise apply."

The legal letter also named 14 Fifa executives, including Infantino and Fifa's head of global football development Arsène Wenger, the former Arsenal manager, who should "specifically preserve all such materials in their possession, custody, or control".

Meanwhile, the former England midfielder Joe Cole has joined those players calling for Infantino to be replaced.

He told *The Dressing Room* podcast: "I spent the summer at the World Cup and you are in and around that Fifa bubble, and we all saw what happened with the hydration breaks, which is a sell on football becoming quarters for the American market. Extending the World Cup, more pressure on the players — all those unsavoury things around Fifa.

"You see it being corporatised in a way where there's clearly and obviously ulterior motives.

"I do believe there needs to be a change at the top of Fifa. I believe it should be player-led and an altruistic thing because football is the world's game.

"When I got the message, I thought, 'I can stand behind this' — and I think all footballers should. We don't want a 120-team World Cup with three million games because it's good for advertising.

"We want the best playing the best, and then we want that money to be spread around the world to the right people and the right places, bringing football up so we can all enjoy this game."

Results

Football

Conference League play-off Second leg

Rapid Vienna (1) **2** — **Hearts** (0) **2**
Kara 34
Cvetković 119
Miller 100
Sent off: Magnússon (Hearts) 76
(aet; agg 4-4; Hearts win 4-3 on pens)

Carabao Cup Second round North

Bradford City (0) **0** — **Burnley** (0) **0**
19,686
(Bradford City win 4-2 on pens)

Newcastle (1) **3** — **West Brom** (1) **2**
Touré 38
Barnes 48, 81
Price 19, 77 (pen)
51,405

Preston (0) **0** — **Everton** (1) **4**
16,834
Barry 25, 59
Johnson 72

South

Tottenham (2) **5** — **Charlton** (0) **1**
Moore 41, Solanke 45
Danso 67, Sávio 82
Davies 85
Jones 87
49,008

Women's Champions League third qualifying round, first leg Chelsea 5 Real Sociedad 2.

Cycling

Vuelta a España
Leading positions: Stage 5 (Falset to Roquetes, 171.1km): 1, M Brennan (GB, Visma-Lease a Bike) 3hr 47min 2sec; 2, J Meeus (Bel, Red Bull-Bora-Hansgrohe); 3, V Albanese (It, EF Education-EasyPost) same time. **Overall** 1, T Pogacar (Slove, UAE Emirates-XRG) 11:26:01; 2, P Roglic (Slove, Red Bull-Bora-Hansgrohe) at 3:21; 3, E Mas (Sp, Movistar) 3:32.

Darts

PDC Players Championship 28
Mattioli Arena, Leicester (England unless stated): **Quarter-finals** L Humphries bt O Bates 6-4; M De Decker (Bel) bt K Huybrechts (Bel) 6-5; B Dolan (Ire) bt L Woodhouse 6-4; L Littler bt K Ratajski (Pol) 6-4. **Semi-finals** Humphries bt De Decker 7-4; Dolan bt Littler 7-4. **Final** Humphries bt Dolan 8-6.

Snooker

Wuhan Open
Third round (England unless stated): Xiao Guodong (China) bt C Wakelin 5-3; M Williams (Wales) bt D Wells (Wales) 5-2; Zhao Xintong (China) bt B Hawkins 5-2; N Robertson (Aus) bt L Davies (Wales) 5-3; J Trump bt Si Jiahui (China) 5-1; Chang Bingyu (China) bt A Carter 5-2; M Selby bt Pang Junxu (China) 5-4; R O'Sullivan bt S Maguire (Scot) 5-2.

Tennis

ATP Winston-Salem Open
Second round S Báez (Arg) bt H Grenier (Fr) 7-5, 7-6 (7-2); F Marozsan (Hun) bt M Kecmanovic (Ser) 6-3, 6-4; L Sonego (It) bt A Manmarino (Fr) 6-1, 7-6 (7-5); B Bonzi (Fr) bt R Hijikata (Aus) 6-1, 6-1; B van de Zandschulp (Neth) bt L Darderi (It) 6-1, 6-0.

WTA Monterrey Open
First round P Udvardy (Hun) bt M Joint (Aus) 7-6 (7-5), 6-1. **Second round** Y Starodubtseva (Ukr) bt J Tjen (Indo) 6-4, 6-3; D Parry (Fr) bt O Oliynykova (Ukr) 6-4, 7-6 (7-3); N Bartunkova (Cz) bt E Liang (Taiwan) 6-7 (4-7), 7-5, 6-4.

US Open qualifying
Flushing Meadows: Second round: Men J Fearnley (GB) bt L Pavlovic (Fr) 6-4, 6-7 (4-7), 6-4; T Samuel (GB) bt B Harris (GB) 4-6, 6-1; 6-4; O Virtanen (Fin) bt J Pinnington Jones (GB) 2-6, 7-6 (8-6), 6-3; H Wendelken (GB) bt R Bertola (Switz) 5-7, 7-6 (7-4), 6-4. **Women** H Dart (GB) bt K Penickova (US) 5-7, 6-0, 6-3.

Fixtures

Football

Conference League play-offs second legs Brighton (0) v Tromso (0) (7.30); Freiburg (3) v Motherwell (1) (5.45); Hibernian (0) v Gent (0) (8.0); Jablonec (0) v Rangers (1) (5.0); Larne (2) v Lincoln Red Imps (0) (8.0).

Carabao Cup: Second round Chelsea v Luton (7.30); Fulham v AFC Wimbledon (8.0).

Enterprise National League Boreham Wood v Boston Utd (7.45).

Cricket

Second Test match: Lord's: First day of five (11.0; 90 overs minimum): England v Pakistan.

Rothesay County Championship: First day of four (11.0; 96 overs minimum): **Division One: Chelmsford** Essex v Surrey. **Sophia Gardens** Glamorgan v Hampshire. **Hove** Sussex v Somerset. **Edgbaston** Warwickshire v Nottinghamshire. **Scarborough** Yorkshire v Leicestershire. **Division Two: Derby** Derbyshire v Middlesex. **Chester-le-Street** Durham v Gloucestershire. **Northampton** Northamptonshire v Kent. **Worcester** Worcestershire v Lancashire.

Golf

Sutton Coldfield DP World Tour British Masters.

Rugby league

Betfred Super League Wigan Warriors v Hull Kingston Rovers (8.0).

Barry's treble gives Moyes a happy return

Preston North End	**0**
Everton *Barry 25, 59, 70, Johnson 72*	**4**

Paul Joyce
Northern Football Correspondent

The odyssey has started all over again. More than 5,500 Everton supporters converged on Preston North End in the hope that they could say they were present at the start of a cup campaign that finally yielded silverware.

By the end of the evening, the first hurdle had been cleared convincingly, with David Moyes swatting aside the club that gave him a leg-up in management back at the tail end of the 1990s.

The Scot owes a large debt of gratitude to Preston though he was not in the mood for benevolence here.

A hat-trick from Thierno Barry, who then provided an assist for substitute Brennan Johnson, ensured a stress-free return on a night when Everton could, and probably should, have scored more.

The reward was a Carabao Cup third-round home game with Wolverhampton Wanderers and a chance to avenge last season's defeat at the same stage to the same opponents.

Deepdale holds all manner of memories for Moyes, not least Friday afternoon chats with the legendary Sir Tom Finney during his four years in charge, and he was warmly received during a lap of honour after the final whistle.

Yet football constantly demands the pursuit of new highs.

He is acutely aware of the craving to end Everton's long trophy drought, a barren run stretching back to 1995, even if a surly reaction to being asked how significant the cup competitions were ahead of the tie resulted in disquiet among a portion of supporters online.

They had not expected Moyes to reply by saying it was not as important as staying in the Premier League.

Still, rather than deciphering press conferences, it is sometimes better to wait and both the strength of the visitors' line-up and the urgency with which they started spoke only of a team intent on winning.

Preston have lost their opening two matches in the Championship and made seven changes, which not only betrayed their priorities but left them struggling to build attacks. Keeping possession was also a task beyond Paul Heckingbottom's side and the only surprise was that it took Everton 25 minutes to make their superiority tell.

The hosts' susceptibility to balls played behind their defence was immediately clear and Barry should have profited from Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall's pass but dallied slightly, allowing Jordan Storey to make an important block.

He could not miss soon after, however, as Dewsbury-Hall's lofted pass picked out the run of the left back Vitalii Mykolenko and he squared for his team-mate to score from six yards.

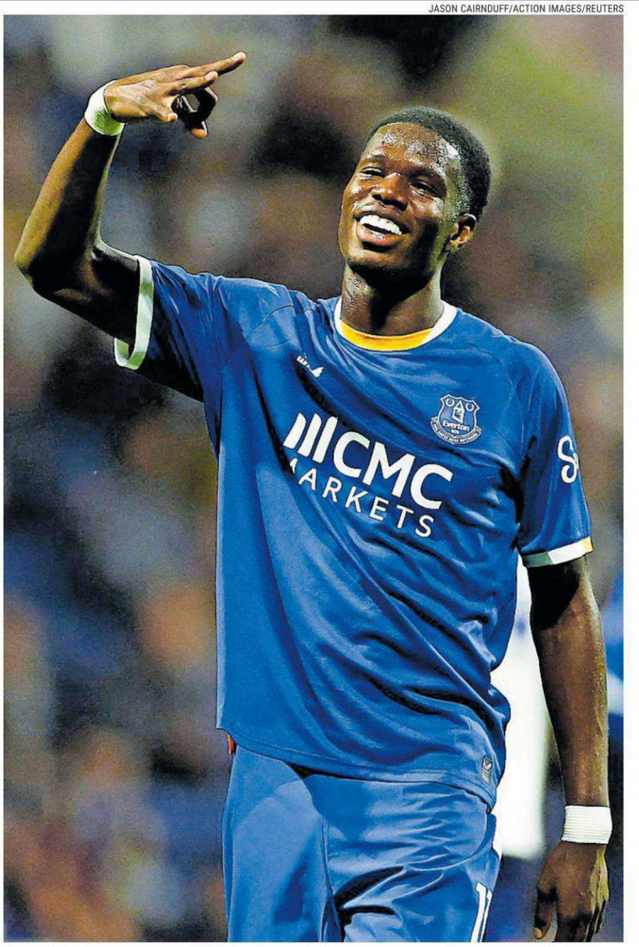
Efforts in the second half would be in a similar vein. Iliman Ndiaye teed up Dewsbury-Hall and his fierce shot was parried into the path of Barry, who bundled home without knowing too much about the chance.

Later, Dewsbury-Hall played in Johnson, who slid a ball across as Barry registered his first treble since a hat-trick for Villarreal against Leganes in December 2024. He now has four goals in two matches this season following his header against Crystal Palace and, importantly, they have all been the sort of strikes a manager would want from a forward who has been in the right place at the right time.

Barry was fitful at best last term and will continue to frustrate at times, but Moyes later revealed the 23-year-old Frenchman's commitment to improvement.

"He said he was working with someone in the summer back home who tried to change his mindset a little bit," Moyes said. "I think he found it really difficult last year, which it can be for boys coming in from overseas. It is worse when you are a centre forward.

JASON CAIRNDUFF/ACTION IMAGES/REUTERS



A confident Barry scored his first hat-trick for Everton and assisted Johnson

"Generally, he has been much better since he came back. I still want more. He had one or two opportunities when he didn't score."

Moyes has had to be patient with Barry and whether that extends to others remains to be seen.

Tyler Dibling, who was denied by a good save from the Preston goalkeeper Lee Nicholls at the end of the opening half, made his first start since the FA Cup third-round defeat to Sunderland back in January.

Yet, it was noticeable that his manager cut a picture of frustration when, at the start of the second half, he was dispossessed rather too easily.

Soon after he was taken off and it may be that Dibling heads out on loan before the deadline. Judging by the disgruntled reaction of Adam Aznou, also 20, to being afforded just a smattering of minutes he also could depart.

Moyes repeated his call for more players to bolster his squad but Johnson, one of those who has arrived, has made a good impression and scored his first goal for the club with a clinical finish. And with that, the rout was complete.

Preston North End (4-2-3-1): L Nicholls, P Valentin, J Storey, L Gibson, A Vukcevic — J Thompson, L Leroy (A Devine 60min) — T Small (A McCann 60) (G Gryba 85), A Moran, D Burgzorg (H Clarke 60) — J Erabi (C Lang 60). **Everton** (4-2-3-1): J Pickford — M Rohl, J Tarkowski, M Keane, V Mykolenko — H Armstrong, J Garner (B Johnson 64) — T Dibling (N Patterson 64), K Dewsbury-Hall (C Alcaraz 81), I Ndiaye (T George 81) — T Barry (A Aznou 82).
Referee T Harrington. **Attendance** 16,834.

Barcola hunt raises doubt over Gakpo

CONTINUED FROM BACK

Barcola has two years remaining on his PSG contract but has made it clear he wants to leave having found himself behind Desire Doué and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia in the pecking order. As a result, he has been excluded from head coach Luis Enrique's plans.

PSG have also added attackers Ferran Torres, Maghnes Akliouche and Mika Godts to the squad that which has won the Champions League in successive seasons, with Enrique having made clear he only wants players who are committed.

Barcola, who turns 24 on September 2, prefers to play off the left and cut inside on to his right foot. His profile and price tag will raise doubts over the future of Cody Gakpo. The Netherlands international forward has been a target for both Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester City.

Liverpool sporting director Richard Hughes has been seeking reinforcements in the wide areas throughout the summer. Winger Víctor Muñoz arrived from Osasuna in a £34.5 million deal in June in a move driven by new head coach Andoni Iraola.

Barcola wants to leave PSG after falling down the pecking order

A replacement for Mohamed Salah on the right is also necessary, but is proving problematic. Liverpool missed out on their first choice, Yan Diomandé, the RB Leipzig attacker who has moved to Real Madrid for £120 million, and have checked on numerous other players.

Ibrahim Mbaye, 18, a PSG team-mate of Barcola, has been tracked, while enquiries to Real Madrid for Endrick and Crystal Palace for Ismaïla Sarr received no encouragement.

Palace, who play in the Europa League this season, are determined to keep the 28-year-old Senegal attacker, so no bid was made for him.

Liverpool have had two bids for Brighton & Hove Albion's Yankubu Minteh — of £50 million and £60 million — rejected.

Relief for Jaissle as Barnes strikes twice to see off West Brom

Newcastle United *Touré 38, Barnes 48, 81*	**3**
West Brom *Price 19, 77 (pen)*	**2**

Martin Hardy
Northern Sports Correspondent

When Harvey Barnes finally killed off the stubborn resistance of Championship West Bromwich Albion, Matthias Jaissle turned to face the Milburn Stand of St James' Park and kissed his fist before raising it in triumph.

Newcastle United's record in this competition in the past four years has been outstanding; winners in 2025, runners-up in 2023, quarter-finalists in 2024 and semi-finalists last season.

That adds a fair amount of pressure to a new man in office, no matter the broadness of his shoulders, and in celebration came a show of relief. St James' Park was full and the backing to Jaissle and a new and evolving squad has been overwhelmingly positive. That is his energy too. Winning games helps and by the finish Newcastle were worthy winners, despite the narrow scoreline.

They trailed early through a fine strike from Isaac Price and were pegged back to 2-2 in the 77th minute when Lewis Hall gave away his second penalty in two games, converted by Price. However Barnes, a fixture of the Eddie Howe reign, struck with nine minutes remaining to seal victory.

Before kick-off the Tyneside club unveiled their most expensive signing of a fairly extraordinary summer in Nico González, inset, a £50 million arrival from Manchester City.

"We are really happy to have him finally here," Jaissle said. "We continue our brave way with young lads, talented players, Nico is young and also experienced but he is a perfect fit and he brings a lot of quality into the squad."

His transfer took Newcastle's spending to £210 million on seven players. Five experienced players have left since the end of last season, with three of those, Anthony Gordon, Sandro Tonali and Bruno Guimarães bringing in £245 million. There has also been the not inconsequential change of manager, from the composed Howe to the volatile pitchside presence of the 38-year-old Jaissle. That is a lot of change for a couple of months, even by Newcastle's standards.

There will be tougher tests ahead for Jaissle and this new-look Newcastle. West Bromwich Albion, having won all of their three previous games this season before arriving on Tyneside, carried that for a period of the first half and went ahead.

When Sean Steur gave away a free kick 30 yards from the Newcastle goal, debutant goalkeeper Ewen Jaouen assumed a cross was coming over from Conor Townsend. Price had other ideas. He instead drilled a low, right-footed shot goalwards that Jaouen, scrambling to his left, could only help into the net.

Ten minutes later Jimmy-Jay Morgan dragged a shot wide from the edge of the Newcastle penalty area. Jaissle's energy on the sideline did not drop all night. He demanded more, jumping energetically along his technical area, and it came.

Three of the new arrivals combined for Newcastle's equaliser with seven minutes left in the first half. Steur played the ball wide to his right. Amar Dedic, who has played for Jaissle before, crossed into the West Bromwich six-yard box, where Bazoumane Touré pressurised Chris Mepham as he prepared to clear and the ball ended up in Matt Ingram's net. The goal was credited to Touré, the £42 million arrival from Hoffenheim.

Newcastle went ahead three minutes after the interval. Hall played a corner to the edge of the West Bromwich penalty area, and a shot from substitute Barnes ricocheted into a crowd of players. When the ball eventually broke free three yards from goal, there was Barnes again to put his side ahead.

However, the lead did not last. In the 76th minute, Harry Whitwell's cross from the right struck Hall's outstretched arm. Bobby Madley, the referee, pointed to the spot and Price sent Jaouen the wrong way.

Parity lasted four minutes. Anthony Elanga fed Dedic in the 81st minute, and his low cross was swept home by Barnes.

Newcastle United (4-2-3-1): E Jaouen — A Dedic, M Thiaw, S Botman, L Hall — S Steur (L Miley 65min), J Ramsey — J Murphy (A Elanga 64), J Willock (Y Wissa 64), B Touré (H Barnes 46) — N Woltemade. **Booked** Steur, Jaouen, Ramsey. **West Bromwich Albion** (4-4-2): M Ingram — A Williams, C Mepham, G Campbell, C Townsend — H Whitwell (Tammer Bany 80), R Nzingoula (C Styles 70), O Diakité (J Molumby 71), I Price (O Bostock 80) — B Stewart, J Morgan (F Myhre 70). **Booked** Nzingoula, Diakité, Stewart.
Referee R Madley.

Sunderland want Grealish loan deal

Window Watch
Gary Jacob, Peter Rutzler, Charlotte Duncker

Sunderland are exploring a loan deal for the Manchester City winger Jack Grealish, potentially rivalling Everton for his services.

Grealish has one year left on his contract at Etihad Stadium, which is understood to be worth in excess of £350,000 a week. He was a substitute against Arsenal in the Community Shield and in the 2-1 win over Bournemouth in the opening Premier League match on Sunday.

City are yet to hear from Sunderland, who have signed the midfielder Jules Ahoka and full backs Thomas Meunier and Dayann Methalie.

Grealish, 30, looked to be getting back to his best during his loan at Everton last season, contributing two goals and six assists in 20 appearances before he suffered a foot stress fracture in January. Everton covered about £12 million of Grealish's wages but they did not exercise a £50 million option to buy a player who cost City £100 million from Aston Villa in 2021.

Sunderland have also agreed personal terms with the Marseille winger Igor Paixão, 26, and are trying to agree a transfer fee. Leeds United have also been interested and they were told he could cost up to £42.7 million.

VILLA AGREE £65M JACKSON DEAL AS CHELSEA WEIGH UP MARTÍNEZ BID

Aston Villa have agreed a £65 million deal for Chelsea striker Nicolas Jackson, as the west London club also weigh up a move for the Villa goalkeeper Emiliano Martínez.

The Jackson deal is for a fee of £47.5 million plus add-ons. Unai Emery, the Villa manager, worked with the Senegal international at his former club Villarreal, turning Jackson from a winger into a centre forward. Jackson's arrival will coincide with Ollie Watkins's departure. The striker is expected to join the Saudi Arabian side Al-Hilal.

Jackson spent last season on loan at Bayern Munich but did not appear in the required number of matches to trigger an obligation-to-buy clause worth £56.2 million. Villa have also had talks about signing the West Ham United centre back Jean-Clair Todibo.

Martínez, the Argentina international has an uncertain future at Villa Park after a move to Juventus broke down this month. He has been offered to Chelsea by the goalkeeper's representatives, with the west London club mulling over whether to make an offer.

This is the second summer that Martínez has told Villa that he wants to seek a challenge elsewhere. Last season, as deals broke down, he ended up staying at the club and was welcomed back into the fold by Emery.

But with Martínez, 33, telling the club he wants to leave again, they signed the Japan international Zion Suzuki to be their first choice. Marco Bizot started their opening weekend defeat by Brighton & Hove Albion but the 24-year-old Suzuki is expected to stake his claim to be the No 1.

Robert Sánchez, who was signed from Brighton in 2023 and has been Chelsea's first-choice goalkeeper for the majority of games since then, made two errors during their 3-2 win over Fulham on Monday evening.

Chelsea are waiting to see whether Manchester City will formalise their interest in Enzo Fernández. They had previously demanded £120 million but a club-imposed deadline elapsed this month for a deal to be struck at that valuation.

Xabi Alonso confirmed yesterday that Fernández would be involved for Chelsea against Luton Town in the Carabao Cup tonight.

"Yes, so we expect that he's involved, he's trained, he's training really well. He's a good professional and he will be involved," Alonso said, before being asked if Fernández would stay after the transfer deadline. "We want to have the best team possible. We know his qualities, he has shown it and we have to wait, but we will think about tomorrow and let's see how things develop."

MARMOUSH SET TO FOLLOW SÁVIO TO SPURS FOR £60M

Tottenham are set to complete the signing of the Manchester City forward Omar Marmoush on loan with an obligation to make the deal permanent for £60 million next summer.

Marmoush joined City from Eintracht Frankfurt for £59 million in January 2025 but he was involved far less in his second season, starting only eight league games. Marmoush scored 16 goals in 62 appearances in all competitions for City.

Grealish came on as a substitute for City in the Community Shield

The 27-year-old's expected arrival continues a summer of big spending at Spurs, who have already brought in Sávio, Sandro Tonali, Mateus Fernandes, and Jan Paul van Hecke for a combined £303 million as well as signing the free agents Marcos Senesi, Andrew Robertson and Martin Dubravka.

Spurs could still potentially bring in Liverpool's Cody Gakpo and sell the Brazil forward Richarlison. Tottenham have an interest in Neco Williams should the Italy left back Destiny Udogie leave. However, Nottingham Forest will not sell the 25-year-old Wales full back, who has a contract until 2029, in this transfer window.

BOUADDI COMPLETES £85M CITY MOVE

Ayyoub Bouaddi has become the most expensive teenage signing in Premier League history after completing his £85 million move to Manchester City, who are paying Lille an initial £81.3 million for the 18-year-old midfielder with the potential of a further £4.3 million in add-ons.

DISASI JOINS PALACE ON LOAN

Crystal Palace have signed the centre back Axel Disasi on loan from Chelsea.

The 28-year-old will replace Maxence Lacroix, who moved the other way for £52 million. Disasi was on loan at West Ham United last season and rejected a return to the east London club. He joined Chelsea from Monaco in 2023 for £38 million and spent the second half of the previous season on loan at Aston Villa.

Palace still want to sign a midfielder and could sell the striker Jean-Philippe Mateta, who has entered the final year of his contract, and the attacking midfielder Ismaïla Sarr, who wants to move to Galatasaray. Palace value Mateta at £40million and Sarr at £60 million.

Palace have hijacked Aston Villa's proposed deal for Club Bruges centre back Joel Ordóñez. Palace have offered to take him on loan for a season with an obligation to buy for £25 million next summer. The 22-year-old played for Ecuador at the World Cup.

BRENTFORD AGREE £40M DEAL FOR DIOUF

Brentford have agreed a £40 million deal to sign the West Ham left back El Hadji Malick Diouf. The 21-year-old joined West Ham for £19 million from Slavia Prague last summer.

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Matthew Syed

Drink problem? England just have a culture problem

We don't yet know what happened. Let's make that crystal clear. We don't know why Brydon Carse was placed in handcuffs. We don't know what he was doing out on the lash at 4am in Derby a few days before reporting for duty for the second Test. We don't know how many Jägerbombs were downed.

We don't know why the police were called. We don't know why Ben Stokes was in the background, like Macavity. We don't know why the bouncers got involved. And, on the wider point, we don't know why England players keep getting involved in these scrapes, scuffles, arguments and broader litany of scandals.

We need to reserve judgment. Apparently.

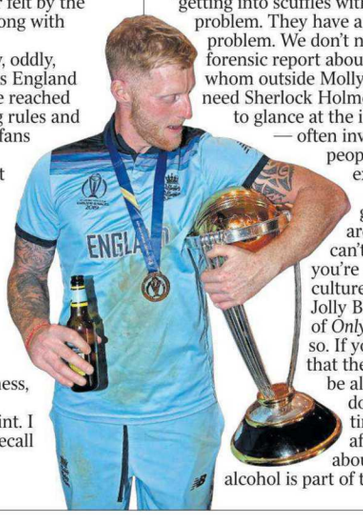
Forgive a little personal reminiscence here but I can't help it. I've probably been to clubs or bars a few hundred times over the years. I am guessing most people reading these words will be able to say the same. But am I unusual in admitting that (and I know you're going to find this astonishing) I haven't yet got into fisticuffs with a bouncer or had my collar felt by the Old Bill? Is there something wrong with me? Am I too square?

Or is there something terribly, oddly, almost farcically wrong with this England team, a group who seem to have reached world-class standards at making rules and then breaking them; at making fans look like mugs for paying top dollar for tickets only to find out the players were on the lash; at insisting on curfews, then breaking curfews, then removing curfews, only for yet more "fun and games" outside Molly Malone's, leading Joe Root to say that he was "hacked off" with the whole thing. You're not the only one, pal.

Just for the sake of completeness, it is perhaps worth reminding ourselves how we got to this point. I am guessing most readers will recall the Noosa incident where Ben Duckett was caught on camera during the Ashes so schnozzled that he could scarcely speak, along with allegations (still not, as far as I am aware, denied) that some players drank for six consecutive days, finishing not long before reporting for the build-up to the third Test.

You will doubtless also know about Harry Brook getting hammered the night before an ODI against New Zealand in Wellington, getting into a scrap with a bouncer, and then lying to the investigation that he was alone when Jacob Bethell and Josh Tongue were with him too. You will also remember that these incidents — and these are just the ones we know about — led to the imposition of a curfew, the players agreeing to go to bed at midnight, an accord instantly violated by Ben Stokes and Gus Atkinson, who after the first Test against New Zealand in June went to a high-profile nightclub on the Kings Road, with Atkinson getting into an altercation with a rugby player.

Perhaps I might put it this way: the England team do not have a drinking problem. Or a late-night problem. Or a party problem. Or a "getting into scuffles with other punters" problem. They have a (vast) culture problem. We don't need to wait for a forensic report about who said what to whom outside Molly Malone's. We don't need Sherlock Holmes here. We just need to glance at the inventory of scandals — often involving captains, the people supposed to set an example.



I know it's just a game and the players are not saints, but why can't they be honest? If you're going to have a culture modelled on The Jolly Boys' Outing episode of *Only Fools and Horses*, say so. If you take the attitude that these young lads should be allowed to let their hair down from time to time, or perhaps night after night, be open about it. If you think alcohol is part of the game (despite the corrosive effects on focus, judgment, reaction time, motor skill, sleep quality, particularly REM, and muscle repair) front up.

But then at least be ready to take a few questions. Like, what's the point of investing millions of pounds of public money to create pipelines of talent if all the sacrifices made by parents, children, coaches and groundstaff to furnish the England team with the cream of the nation's young players is pissed away?

Like, what's the point of all this infrastructure if the moment a young prodigy arrives at the pinnacle of the game he discovers that the done thing is not to prepare body and mind for peak performance, but to go on the sherbets. It doesn't matter if it is only a few who act this way. This is more than enough to weaken and corrode the ethos of a team.

After the Kings Road incident, I said that the role of Rob Key was untenable. My opinion has only hardened. He's obviously a nice bloke but this is a task for someone with a deep understanding of how to transform a culture. When Sir Alex Ferguson took over at Manchester United, he imposed clear standards, surveillance (he had an small army of people snooping around Manchester night spots) and sanctions. Perhaps a bit excessive, but the drinking culture he was seeking to confront was excessive too.

Those who didn't comply, like Paul McGrath and Norman Whiteside, were shipped out. And perhaps what's most interesting is that when McGrath was interviewed many years later, he didn't resent Ferguson but admired him more than ever. He knew that this dose of realism was utterly necessary, not just for United to improve but for the players to gain the important insight that while pints are fun, they are nothing compared to the soul-deep satisfaction of reaching one's potential. "I only wish he'd got rid of me sooner," McGrath said.

This England team has plenty of potential. Nobody doubts that. They were impressive against an admittedly weak Pakistan team in the first Test. But anyone who thinks they are making the best of themselves is deluded.

You can be sure that when there are multiple high-profile incidents of drunkenness and loutishness, there will also be a submerged iceberg of shoddy preparation and practice. Key has been in the leadership role for four years without — how can I put this? — showing any talent for improving the culture. It is not judgmental to say he should go. It seems more like a statement of the bleedin' obvious.

The video of Carse in handcuffs at 4am is the latest in a long line of controversies involving centrally contracted England cricketers, one of which included Stokes, inset, when he was still Test captain

LIV lays off most of staff with survival package not yet sealed

Golf

Rick Broadbent

LIV Golf has informed the majority of its staff that they will be laid off next week as it scales back in the wake of Saudi Arabia pulling the plug on its $5billion backing.

Although Scott O'Neil, the chief executive, remains optimistic that he can finalise a survival package for LIV 2.0 in the coming months, there is no concrete deal to replace the Public Investment Fund. Numerous players are planning to move to the DP World Tour, which has made it clear that players should not expect conditional releases if they stay with LIV. That means they are likely to be fined each time they play a LIV event while remaining members of the DP World Tour. LIV has about 300 staff in the UK and the US.

A LIV Golf spokesperson said: "The funding commitment announced by PIF earlier this year will reach its conclusion. As a result, we are scaling back operations as we transition to the next chapter of LIV Golf and work toward making LIV 2.0 a reality. This week, we informed many of our colleagues that their employment under LIV 1.0 will end in the first week of September. We are grateful to our employees for their hard work and dedication in building LIV Golf, and we remain committed to supporting those affected through this transition."

LIV has found a new lead investor, believed to be BC Partners, although this has not been confirmed officially. However, they have only signed a term sheet and the anticipated loss of big names such as Jon Rahm has hampered turning that into something more meaningful. A LIV source said that with LIV's present funding coming to an end, it had to "scale back its current operations regardless of the final outcome".

The rebel league has had a troubled year from the start, with five-times major winner Brooks Koepka quitting and returning to the PGA Tour. The dam burst in April, though, when the PIF said bankrolling LIV was "no longer consistent with the current phase of PIF's investment strategy," blaming changing priorities and "macro economics". Saudi Arabia was scaling back and focusing on sustainable projects even before the US attack on Iran in February.

LIV cancelled two events this season, including the season finale in Michigan, and it may well be that last week's tournament in Indianapolis was the last in its four-year history.

LIV will retain some staff as it continues to work on a revamped, truncated league, and still hopes to re-employ more if LIV 2.0 gets off the ground. The new version would feature ten events with five in the US and five international rounds. O'Neil had been seeking $350 million in funding, but hopes of a deal have been further hampered by the fact two of the league's partners are suing them for unpaid bills worth more than $1million apiece.

The PGA Tour's chief executive, Brian Rolapp, this week made clear there would be no easy way back for any LIV players, saying there were no plans to create a programme like the one that enabled Koepka to return.

Sport Second Rothesay Test: England v Pakistan

Root is clearly right captain

Mike Atherton

Chief Cricket Correspondent

When the first ball is bowled today, there will have been 81 days between the conclusion of the first Lord's Test of the summer and the start of the second. Less than three months, in other words, during which the England team have been convulsed with story after story. "It's been quite crazy," Josh Tongue said yesterday, with laconic understatement. He should be thankful he's not been on the cricket news beat.

When Gus Atkinson flattened Matt Henry's middle stump to rout New Zealand in early June, there was optimism at the ECB that a difficult winter had been put behind them. After sounding reluctant to change his coaching philosophy at the end of the Ashes, Brendon McCullum had been noticeably more hands-on in the T20 World Cup that followed, and during the opening Test of the summer. A rapid win against a good New Zealand team offered hope.

All that was shattered in the 24 hours that followed, and since then it has been the "newsiest" summer of cricket for many years. Three players have been dropped pending investigations by the regulator, all three as a consequence of late-night incidents. Ben Stokes stood down in a blaze of indulgent cricket, to be followed by McCullum. Joe Root returned to a role he had held four years prior, and Stephen Fleming was appointed as head coach of the Test team, though he will not take up the reins until the winter.

And so here we are, at Lord's again, but with a sense of nervousness prevailing, only partly inspired by the uncertainty of how England's players might spend their nights in the capital this week amid concern that the public are losing patience with them. There is also nervousness about the strength of Pakistan and their ability to compete, after a dreadful performance at Leeds, and about the pitch, which was reported as "unsatisfactory" after the New Zealand game.

If the past week or so has demonstrated anything, it is that Joe Root is the right man for this particular moment. Who knows how long he will be in post, or how successful the next part of his career will be, but it would be hard to imagine Harry Brook, as Test captain, having to front up this week to answer questions about Brydon Carse after his own experience in the winter. For now, he can be left to demonstrate both his brilliance as a batsman and growing maturity as a cricketer.

Root was wise to tackle the Carse story on Tuesday. He brought forward his normal pre-match press conference a day and did not hide behind the regulator's investigation, which would have been easy to do. In his own quiet and understated way, he made his feelings plain and nobody has been left in any doubt about his determination to try to improve the team's reputation which, as always, will depend on results but also something less tangible.

In the week when he made another entreaty to his players around the need to improve their off-field decision-making, he could have easily pointed to Mitchell Starc's rise to No 1 in the Test rankings as relevant. Starc, of course, maintained monastic discipline during the entirety of the Ashes to improve his chances of getting through five potentially gruelling Tests and, at 36, is maintaining his pace and fitness to a remarkable degree. That said, anyone with an ounce of cricket knowledge would know that for every top-class player who has been a good bloke or an abstainer, there are as many who have not been. Players should be judged on their performances on the field in the main, unless they are demonstrably in the wrong off it.

It is the fault of no one else but the players, though, that scrutiny falls on this area right now, and in Root they could not have a better cricketer to lead that response. Good cricket, good sense and stability is his aim, as he looks to build on the impressive win at Leeds. If England go into this game unchanged, as is likely, it will be the first time they have done so in consecutive Tests for more than a year, which reflects both the run of results and the upheaval.

For Pakistan, the issues are deeper and more troubling, given they relate to performance and talent on the field. The best history of Pakistan cricket is Osman Samiuddin's *The Unquiet Ones*, a title deliberately taken to reflect both the turbulent nature of their cricket off the field, but also their unpredictable brilliance on it. Yet their performance at Headingley could only be described as "quiet"; it carried none of the conviction or flair we have come to associate with their teams of the past.

They will be boosted by the return of Babar Azam and nobody will be more delighted to see him back than Salman Ali Agha, the stand-in captain at Leeds. Babar may not be the player of old, but he remains the classiest batsman in the squad with a decent record against England. His return will require a shuffle to the batting order, with the young opener Azan Awais vulnerable to the chop. It was the bowling at Leeds, above all, that required attention and that may be a harder fix.

Pakistan do have a decent recent record on the ground, the relevance of which is questionable with the last two wins coming a decade and eight years ago. How far the bowlers on both sides will be helped by the conditions this week at Lord's remains to be seen, but there will be understandable scrutiny, after the New Zealand Test, which lasted only 165 overs, the second-shortest on record at the ground. Movement is one thing, unpredictable bounce another and there was too much of the latter last time.

It was a costly match for Lord's, both financially and reputationally. As well as a demerit point on the back of the match referee's report, next year's World Test Championship final has been scheduled across the river at the Oval. Neither of these two teams have a hope of making that showpiece occasion, lying seventh and bottom as they are. A bottom-of-the-table clash, then, but with enough context to raise interest levels. Watching England this summer has rarely been dull.

Teams for the second Test at Lord's

England (probable)	Age	Tests	Runs	Bat ave	100s	Wkts	Bowl ave
Joe Root (Yorkshire, captain)	35	167	14,180	**50.64**	41	74	**48.09**
Jofra Archer (Sussex)	31	21	316	**10.89**	0	74	**28.82**
Gus Atkinson (Surrey)	28	19	516	**19.11**	1	80	**23.62**
Harry Brook (Yorkshire)	27	39	3,486	**53.63**	10	1	**123.00**
Jordan Cox (Essex)	25	2	125	**41.66**	0	–	–
Ben Duckett (Nottinghamshire)	31	47	3,335	**39.70**	7	–	–
Emilio Gay (Durham)	26	4	172	**24.57**	0	–	–
Dan Lawrence (Surrey)	29	15	722	**27.76**	0	3	**44.33**
Ollie Robinson (Sussex)	32	22	440	**14.19**	0	91	**20.86**
†**Jamie Smith** (Surrey)	26	23	1,412	**39.22**	2	–	–
Josh Tongue (Nottinghamshire)	28	13	76	**5.06**	0	65	**27.38**

Pakistan (from)	Age	Tests	Runs	Bat ave	100s	Wkts	Bowl ave
Babar Azam (captain)	31	64	4,674	**43.68**	9	2	**21.00**
Abdullah Shafique	26	26	1,870	**41.55**	6	–	–
Ali Usman	33	3	19	**3.80**	0	11	**22.63**
Imam-ul-Haq	30	30	1,865	**34.53**	3	0	–
Khurram Shahzad	26	9	138	**9.20**	0	35	**29.14**
Mohammad Abbas	36	31	162	**6.48**	0	119	**22.84**
Mohammad Ali	33	7	4	**0.57**	0	16	**43.43**
†**Mohammad Rizwan**	34	46	2,674	**38.75**	3	–	–
Salman Agha	35	28	1,708	**36.34**	3	20	**61.15**
Saud Shakeel	30	24	1,821	**42.34**	4	0	–
Shan Masood	36	48	2,799	**30.75**	7	2	**46.00**
Ubaid Shah	20	1	0	**0**	0	2	**39.50**

First Test England won by an innings and 103 runs (Headingley).
Second: Today-Monday (Lord's). **Third: Sept 9-13** (Edgbaston).

Police investigate 'assault' after incident involving Carse

Derbyshire police are investigating an alleged assault after an incident involving the England seam bowler Brydon Carse at a nightclub in Derby in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Carse, 31, was seen in handcuffs in footage which circulated online after he was arrested on suspicion of being drunk and disorderly, although he was subsequently de-arrested shortly afterwards having agreed to leave the area.

Derbyshire police confirmed in a statement last night that they are "investigating allegations of an assault in Derby city centre. No arrests have yet been made and the investigation is ongoing." The police have not said whether Carse had any role in the alleged assault.

The footage of Carse in handcuffs was filmed at about 4am on Sunday morning after he was denied re-entry to the nightclub. The former England captain Ben Stokes and centrally contracted England bowler Matthew Potts were clearly visible in the background of the footage.

Carse was removed from England's squad for the second Test after the matter was referred to the independent cricket regulator, which is investigating. He will not be available for selection for England pending the regulator's investigation and any police investigation.

The ECB has declined to comment.

England v Pakistan
Second Test, Lord's
Starts today, 11am
TV: Sky Sports Main Event

Key, Root and the new national selector Marcus North at Lord's yesterday — the

Drop-in pitches a cure

Elizabeth Ammon

The last time a Test match was played at Lord's, only 166 overs were bowled on a pitch that was deemed "unsatisfactory" by the sport's governing body, prompting criticism from a host of former players and an MCC apology.

The surface for the first Test against New Zealand in June had unpredictable and sometimes dangerous bounce, with 24 of the 40 wickets falling either leg-before or bowled. It was part of the reason that next year's World Test Championship final was allocated to the Oval rather than the home of cricket.

Nearly three months on, no one is expecting that kind of unpredictability as Test cricket returns to Lord's with the visit of Pakistan today. The issues this year came within the context of a freak weather trap: weeks of heat parched the square, followed immediately by a week of heavy rain that kept the surface sealed under the covers, causing uneven patches.

"The lead-up to this one has been very different and the pitch looks very different," Joe Root, the England captain, said on Monday. "That was one thing that I did feel sorry for the groundsman in that last Test. We had a week's worth of rain and he probably didn't get the chance to get it how he would have liked.

"Clearly there have been some different types of pitches we have had to contend with here at Lord's but we need to be skilful enough to contend with whatever it is."

Despite those mitigating circumstances, there was plenty of criticism after that New Zealand match, which England won by 115 runs. Nasser Hussain, the former

after 81 days of turbulence

JED LEICESTER / MCC; BEN WHITLEY/PA

Five-day forecast for Lord's

- **Today** Thundery showers and a gentle breeze
- **Tomorrow** Thundery showers and a gentle breeze
- **Day three** Light rain and a moderate breeze
- **Day four** Thundery showers and a gentle breeze
- **Day five** Sunny intervals and a moderate breeze

captain will be relieved to get back to playing cricket today after fielding questions about matters off the pitch this week

for poor Lord's surface

England captain and Sky pundit, described it as "substandard", while Stuart Broad, also on Sky, said: "It's not been a good pitch for some time."

The pre-Test view is that this looks to be a fairly typical Lord's pitch — fairly low and slow. That comes from it being the most-used square in the country, and tired from overuse.

Pitch preparation is not an exact science — there are many factors at play and it is just not as simple as "prepare one with a bit more pace and carry". Groundsmen deal with heavy clay soils that must be rolled to squeeze out air and lock in moisture. If it gets too wet, the pitch goes soft; if a hot wind bakes the top too fast, you get a hard crust over soft soil, causing erratic bounce. Add in sudden shifts in humidity or sunshine, and they are working at the mercy of the elements.

Fixing the square is a long job, and the pressure is real after the ICC rated the New Zealand Test pitch "unsatisfactory" and handed Lord's a demerit point. Under ICC regulations, demerit points stay on a venue's record for a rolling five-year period. An "unsatisfactory" pitch carries one point, while a "poor" surface incurs three and an "unfit" pitch five. If a ground reaches six demerit points within five years, it is given an automatic 12-month ban from hosting international cricket — unthinkable for the home of cricket.

MCC cannot simply dig up all 20 strips, so it is relaying pitches in phases. A new pitch requires two to three years of rolling, settling and root integration before it can survive a five-day Test.

To help the square recover, the club have introduced hybrid pitches and will begin cultivating drop-in pitches on the Nursery Ground which can, in time, be lifted by crane through a gap under the media centre — with only 40mm to spare. MCC hopes they will be ready by the 2028 season.

Lord's pitches may not have the pace or carry of Headingley or Old Trafford, but it is unlikely there will be a repeat of the substandard surface of three months ago.

CONTINUED FROM BACK

Root didn't want job, says father

involved. "There is a lot of mutual respect there and the other thing that motivates him is that he has a talented but very young side and he feels like he can have an impact on them.

"England played really well at Headingley and that is what is frustrating Joe — that the stuff over the weekend is not allowing him to talk about that and demonstrate what they achieved."

Matt Root was referring to the latest controversy to engulf the England team after footage emerged of the bowler Brydon Carse being handcuffed by police after a night out in Derby. "It is frustrating for Joe — he's tried to give players responsibility for their own actions and he was round here on Sunday afternoon and he was on the phone for probably four hours trying to sort things out [regarding the Carse situation]," his father told talkSPORT.

The fast bowler Josh Tongue said that Root had got his squad together before training on Monday and "made it clear what he expects from us."

"Playing for England is a privilege," Tongue said. "I think we've just got to make sure we're as professional as we can be."

Robinson excels on spicy decks — now to show stamina

Bowler has impressed on England return but doubts around his pace and durability persist, writes **Steve James**

While almost everyone else in the cricketing world will be hoping that the Lord's pitch is nothing like the one that lasted just 166 overs against New Zealand, in private Ollie Robinson will probably want more of the same. For it was there in June that he announced his return to Test cricket after a 27-month absence with three wickets in his first over, seven in the match and a medal for the game's outstanding player.

That Robinson missed the next Test through injury and was then not selected for Bazball's final act at Trent Bridge merely confirmed the issues of fitness and trust that have lingered around him for so long. But back he came at Headingley against Pakistan with a wicket from the first ball of the match, eight in total and yet another medal.

The two pitches offered plenty of seam movement: one at Lord's with low bounce and another at Headingley with much higher bounce. Both were putty in the hands of a skilled practitioner like Robinson.

Facing him on either surface was an absolute nightmare for any of the batsmen, as Robinson, 32 now and so wise about the art of bowling, used the wobble-seam delivery to devastating effect. He seemed a little surprised when holding the seam up proud and managing to swing one back into the left-hander Shan Masood to trap him leg-before, but generally it was considerable movement from the wobble seam — pressing more firmly on the ball with his index finger to try to nip the ball away, and harder with the middle finger for the nip-backer — that caused all manner of problems.

But that movement is rendered almost useless if the length is not immaculate, and that is where Robinson excels. As odd as it might sound, bowlers who can find that length that is not full enough to drive and not short enough to attack off the back foot are rare, particularly as that length will vary on different pitches of different pace and bounce.

Yes, Robinson's height at 6ft 5in and a short delivery stride that mitigates a bent front leg combine to create a high release point that allows him more margin for error, but his wonderful command of the length that hits the fabled "top of off stump" enables him to stand out from other bowlers of the same pace.

Robinson is not quick, far from it. And he is actually slower this time around in Test cricket (he has averaged just under 79mph this summer) than his previous stint, where in general his opening two spells averaged above 81mph before dropping off.

He is, though, not the type of bowler Rob Key was referencing when he made his famous "75mph keeper up, dobbing it on a length doesn't work in Test cricket" comment about so many of the bowlers in county cricket, just as Michael Neser and Matt Henry, who have achieved success against England recently with the keeper standing up for Australia and New Zealand respectively, are not either.

Pace still matters. The common wisdom remains that bowlers above 85mph challenge the batsmen's decision-making more than any others, and quick bowlers remain the key to winning Test matches.

So, the best batsmen in Test cricket are still those with the best back-foot games, as reinforced by Ricky Ponting's recent call for Marnus Labuschagne to be dropped from Australia's side because technical deficiencies mean "he can't score off the back foot" and as Ponting says: "If you can't score off the back foot in Test cricket then batting becomes a hard game."

But there has always been a place in the Test game for those of lesser pace, as long as they possess extraordinary skill and/or accuracy, and Robinson's record over 22 Tests — 91 wickets at 20.86 (for reference James Anderson's Test average was 26.45 and Stuart Broad's 27.68) — proves that. His comfort in the role of a new-ball bowler has been a huge boon to England this summer after their problems with that position, aside from Jofra Archer, in last winter's Ashes.

However, two matches on spicy pitches does not really answer the questions around Robinson's stamina, which were still evident this season when two of his Sussex coaches, asked to select their England Test XI for a social media clip, omitted their man specifically because they worried about his ability to return for spells three, four and beyond.

Key made an interesting comment, too, about Robinson this year when he said: "You just need to trust you know what you're going to get." And we certainly know what that is if there is seam movement and games that do not last too long. Perhaps now a flatter Lord's pitch this week can tell us a bit more.

Robinson was player of the match in both of his Tests this summer

Sport

Georgia's 'superpower'
1,500m star Hunter Bell on why tough past is her strength
Matt Lawton, page 57

Matthew Syed
Drink problem? England team just have a culture problem
Page 61

Uefa calls off World Cup boycott threat

Martyn Ziegler Chief Sports Reporter

Uefa will call off its threatened boycott of Fifa tournaments after receiving guarantees that the scheme to sell off stakes in the World Cup will not be revived — but it plans to step up action against Gianni Infantino.

The 55 European nations had agreed a boycott of the competitions after the Fifa president Infantino's sell-off plan was revealed by The Times last month. The move comes as Italy and Northern Ireland became the latest countries formally to withdraw their endorsement of Infantino's re-election.

Uefa chiefs will tell a meeting of its executive committee and the majority of the presidents of its 55 member associations in Monaco today that the two conditions for lifting the boycott have been met.

The first was for Fifa to withdraw the proposal to sell off stakes in the major competitions, which happened at the end of July, and the second that "assurances have to be made that such attempts to disfigure the game in this way will never be made again".

Teams, including England, head to Poland on Monday for the Fifa Under-20 Women's World Cup. England are to play a warm-up against New Caledonia at St George's Park on Saturday.

Uefa is still determined that Infantino should step down as Fifa president and insiders said there would be more action to follow but that the boycott was always about the World Cup sell-off rather than his position, and that it would be wrong to expect young players to miss tournaments now that the guarantees had been secured.

Infantino is continuing to try to reclaim support after a disastrous few weeks in which his apparent stroll towards being re-elected unopposed next year turned into a global campaign against him involving the leaders of Uefa, the Asian Football Confederation and Concacaf.

A number of former players who have been part of the Fifa Legends group who receive payment and expenses to attend Fifa events have issued statements backing Infantino: the Brazilians Cafu and Roberto Carlos, and former Argentina players Javier Zanetti and Javier Pastore.

The Uefa meeting in Monaco is expected to receive an update on new efforts to target Infantino over his World Cup sell-off plan.

This month, Uefa sent Infantino a letter from its US-based lawyers warning it is considering legal action and stating that all documents and information relating to the plan, called Fifa Forward Enterprises (FFE), to sell a stake in Fifa tournaments to private investors must be preserved.

The letter, a copy of which has been seen by The Times, said: "Uefa hereby gives formal notice that it is actively considering legal action, arbitration, and/or regulatory complaints arising out of and in connection with the FFE plan proposed by Fifa and all related matters.

"You and Fifa are required to take immediate steps to identify, locate, and preserve all documents and electronically stored information described in this notice that are in your or Fifa's possession, custody, or control. These

Continued on page 58

MATT IMPEY/SHUTTERSTOCK

New name, Sávio looks new man

Tottenham's new £75m signing from Manchester City scores on his debut as Spurs trounce Charlton Athletic in Carabao Cup. Reports, pages 58-59

Root's dad: Joe didn't want job

Elizabeth Ammon

Joe Root's father has revealed that his son did not initially want to accept the England captaincy for a second time.

Root, 35, has taken on the role he previously held in the Test team between 2017 and 2022 after Ben Stokes's sudden retirement from international cricket. He led the side in the second Test against New Zealand at the Oval in June after Stokes was suspended for breaking the team's midnight curfew, before taking on the role full-time again, starting with a convincing win over Pakistan at Headingley last week.

"When he was given the job for the Oval Test I asked, 'If they offered it to you full-time would you take it?' and he said no," Matt Root, Joe's father, said. "I think he's impressed with Stephen Fleming [the new Test head coach], which has motivated Joe to get

Continued on page 63

Liverpool push for Barcola deal

Martyn Ziegler Chief Sports Reporter
Paul Joyce
Northern Football Correspondent

Liverpool are set for more talks with Paris Saint-Germain as they look to sign winger Bradley Barcola before next Tuesday's transfer deadline.

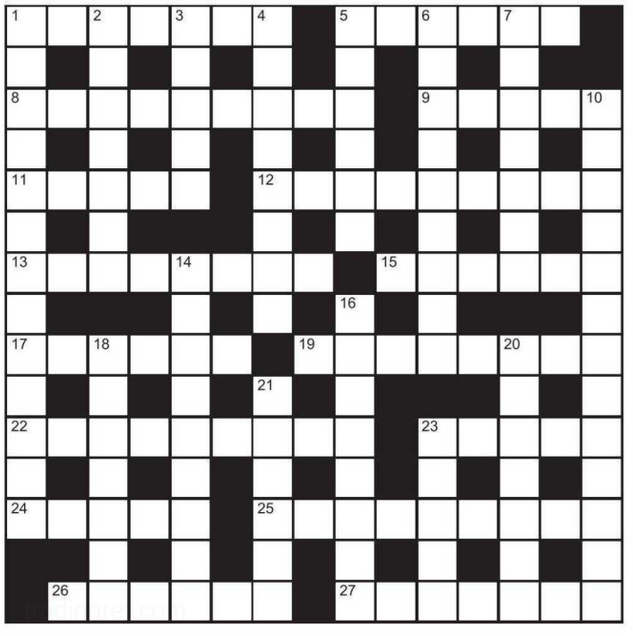
The France international has been a priority for the Anfield club for much of the summer and lengthy negotiations are continuing in the hope of ending the impasse over the player's valuation.

PSG originally valued Barcola at £145 million, but have since lowered their asking price. However, if an agreement is reached, the final fee is still expected to be about £115 million.

That would make Barcola the second-most expensive signing in Liverpool's history, behind £125 million Alexander Isak, given that £16 million of

Continued on page 59

Times Crossword 29,632



ACROSS

1 What's sandwiched between labels, spinning? (7)
5 Refuse to acknowledge broadcast following U-turn of papers (6)
8 Unrehearsed dance exercises welcomed by Greek character on island (9)
9 Bent and bared firm bottom (5)
11 Some say no before going round wood (5)
12 Element of clue uncovered in a note about Duck's second offering? (9)
13 One competitor moving east in corporate system (8)
15 Rabbit's just perfect (4,2)
17 Duke in difficulty knocked over king's port (6)
19 Drink welcome around noon — relax at regular intervals (5,3)
22 In protecting M's predecessor, Bond's not fair? (9)
23 Branch where one may settle one's bill? (5)
24 Crush spirit, overcoming resistance with decisiveness at the front (5)
25 Piece of furniture's too soft, rickety and almost antique (9)
26 Suitable space left in empty salvage yard (6)
27 Desperate country's short — it's embroiled in recession (7)

DOWN

1 Scary fish under tree in burn (5-8)
2 Go around rear of shop and look for milk (7)
3 Fool can accept losing you (5)
4 Two coppers ask criminal about drug — something small consumed at parties? (8)
5 Manage to obtain alcoholic drink during party (4,2)
6 Group periodically saying heartless command (9)
7 Side retains cup status following European match (7)
10 Member of church choir not calm, excited about start of *Alleluia!* (5,8)
14 Morning mist envelops thoroughfare in city (9)
16 Forget about sardonic nob on the radio (5,3)
18 Records kept are to include chapter four (7)
20 Eject four drunken university bores time after time (4,3)
21 Year and a month to climb outside of large tower (6)
23 Staple page together with a street map on the inside (5)

Yesterday's solution 29,631

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TIMES 2

August 27 | 2026

‘Most people just see me as tits and hair but that’s part of the fun’

The day I met Dolly Parton

by Katie Glass

tim

Caitlin Moran's Celebrity Watch

6 Ed Sheeran

Good day, dearest Times reader, and welcome to the week where we learnt that the global megastar Ed Sheeran seems to have made a very powerful and specific enemy. Indeed, possibly the only kind of enemy that can trouble someone worth £410 million: a dude who can really shag up the legitimacy of your lavatory.

Courtesy of The Sun, we were given the headline "Shape of loo", for which I admit admiration, and the following details: "Ed Sheeran has been panned by planners over an unauthorised toilet at his £3.3 million mansion flat." Reading on, we learnt that Sheeran, 35, was "hit with a council enforcement notice" after a waste pipe was fitted "without permission at the grade II listed property he owns in west London".

It seems Sheeran — acting like a reckless rock star — added an en suite bathroom without getting the necessary paperwork and "the works went unnoticed until a busybody blew the whistle". He is now, apparently, applying for retrospective permission, but if it is not given "his improvement works could go down the drain".

Were I Sheeran, I would be feeling very uneasy. Why? Well, you have to be very close to someone to know the details of their sewage paperwork. You would have to be in the absolute centre of the circle of trust to get access to someone's en suite, and know that — even as you flushed — you were looking at some unauthorised piping. Who would know this? Or care? And then be motivated enough to go full Toilet Narc and dob him in?

I don't want to make Sheeran unnecessarily paranoid but in this case I feel the nearest parallel is that of Coleen Rooney and Rebekah Vardy. Aptly, for a man with toilet problems, Sheeran needs to work out where the leak has come from. Yes, he needs to go full Bogatha Christie. Or perhaps Hercule Poorot. Or is it Shitlock Holmes? Either way, once he's worked out his Celebrity Detective Name, he needs to get on this, fast.

3 Cindy Crawford

When someone is famous we experience the illusion of knowing them: we feel we "get" their "vibe".

Well, how wrong we are! For last week an interview with the actress Kaia Gerber threw the cat among the pigeons, Cindy Crawford-wise. Crawford, the all-American supermodel, is Gerber's mother, and Gerber had some wild revelations.

"She was like, 'I don't want you to get possessed,'" Gerber said when explaining why, during her first acting gig, Crawford had pressed into her hands a bottle of holy water.

Gerber, who was in *American Horror Story: Double Feature*, went on to explain that she had undergone an exorcism as a child. Yes, Crawford *had her child exorcised*. How? "They played a didgeridoo all over me. That did actually happen. I've never talked about it, but it did happen. I'm all healed now," Gerber added.

During the supermodel era, none of us thought these glamazons would go on to exorcise their children with didgeridoos. But perhaps we were misinterpreting things. When her fellow supe Linda Evangelista said, "We don't wake up for less than $10,000 a day," maybe she meant: "We don't levitate above the bed, our heads revolving, screaming, 'Your mother cooks socks in Hell!' for less than $10,000 a day."

2 Georgina Rodríguez

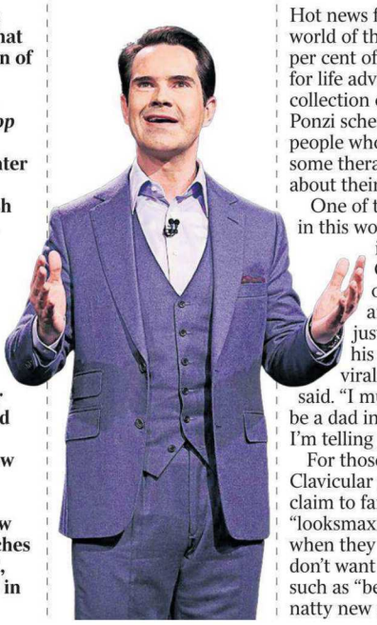
The footballering legend Cristiano Ronaldo got married earlier this month to Georgina Rodríguez, his fiancée of ten years. As he is soccer's first billionaire, worth an estimated $1.2 billion, one would expect a Ronaldo wedding to be a bells-and-whistles glam affair, but no. The couple had a small, intimate wedding in their front room.

"Castles, islands, horses, cars — we have all that within reach every day," Rodríguez explained to Vogue. "But something intimate, that's more unusual for us. In 30 years' time I want the children to eat breakfast and think, something wonderful happened at this table — the wedding vows of our parents."

It should be noted, however, that this intimate "table wedding" also involved Rodríguez wearing a necklace with 98 pear-shaped diamonds; 25-carat diamond earrings; two diamond rings from Chopard; and a diamond bracelet so her wrists didn't feel dowdy. Total cost: $50 million.

I mean, on the one hand wearing diamonds in your front room isn't antithetical to intimacy. On the other hand, though, if the kids grow up to be realistic about the "wonderful" thing that happened at the breakfast table, it's that their mum rocked up in jewels that equalled the GDP of Tuvalu. Then poured out their Frosties.

5 Jimmy Carr



To paraphrase Jane Austen, it is a truth universally acknowledged that a television franchise in possession of a value between £50 million and £100 million must be in want of a new presenter. And so it is that *Top Gear*, in abeyance following the horrific crash in which the presenter Freddie Flintoff nearly died, has begun considering who might wish to fill Flintoff's blood-filled boots.

Anyone who gets the gig will surely stipulate that their work consist primarily of "being in the studio making jokes about Skodas" and less "in intensive care for six months". Accordingly, the first name floated to front this new *Top Gear* has been... Jimmy Carr, who could definitely do that. And has the perfect name for presenting a show about automobiles.

I hope this nominative determinism continues for the new presenting team and that approaches have been made to Harrison Ford, Nick Ferrari and anyone involved in the UK garage scene.

4 Clavicular

Hot news from the reliably weird world of the manosphere, where 48 per cent of the world's population look for life advice from a seemingly ragtag collection of sex cases, dudes working Ponzi schemes on gullible incels and people who just really need to get some therapy about how they feel about their dads.

One of the most talked-about men in this world — who goes by the intriguing *nom de internet* of Clavicular — has been opening up about his hopes and dreams. Despite being just 20, Clavicular made sure his next livestream went super viral: "I must have children," he said. "I must get children today. I will be a dad in the next few months, guys, I'm telling you."

For those not fully across the whole Clavicular phenomenon, his main claim to fame is that he is an expert in "looksmaxxing", the term men use when they want to look better but don't want to use "women phrases" such as "beauty regime" or "getting a natty new cardigan". And Clavicular's recipe for "looksmaxxing" is truly novel, combining getting "ripped" by taking anabolic steroids, using crystal meth as an appetite suppressant and, most famously, "bonesmashing". Unfortunately this is exactly what you hope it isn't: yes, Clavicular suggests his fans hit themselves in the face with a hammer so that the bones grow back "stronger" and "more masculine".

To gain the specifics of how you too could hit yourself in the face with a hammer to look better, Clavicular charges $50 a month to join Clavicular's Clan, which I guess at least makes him a good provider, albeit a very stupid one, if and when the baby arrives.

But *will* a baby arrive? After all, Clavicular presents as a young man with a very sketchy idea of how things work physically. Who, in a world riddled with Ozempic, suggests taking crystal meth to get "beach body ready"? Or, indeed, looks at a hammer, and thinks, that is the obvious way to improve my face?

I'll be honest, I don't think this dude knows how to make a baby. I think he thinks you maybe buy them off the internet, or make them by hitting dinosaur eggs with a spade and hoping a small person falls out. Ladies, I don't think we need to start knitting Clavicular booties for Clavicular Jr just yet.

The Sussexes

It's coming home! It's coming home! It's coming! Megxit's coming home!

Yes! Last week Britain — and, indeed, the world — woke up to truly unexpected news. Six years after one of the all-time high-profile international flounces, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex are giving up America and returning to the UK.

And let's not be disingenuous or faux-shrugging about this — it *is* big news. We live in a monarchy, Prince Harry is our prince and we've known — and paid for — him since before he was born. It's not nothing that he has decided to return home. It does mean something. But what?

Well, the first item of significance of the Reverse Megxit is that it *was* such a surprise. No one knew it was happening. It blindsided everyone. And this is important information because in the past six years countless "insiders" and "royal experts" have confidently told us what Harry and Meghan are really up to, what they're "angry" or "depressed" about, the state of their relationship, and who they are or aren't hanging out with.

Suddenly all these authoritative royal Deep Throats look a lot less well connected, given that the Sussexes appear to have bought a UK house, individually wrapped and packed all of Meghan's 300,000 pots of unsold jam, and registered their children with British schools — due to start in the September term — all without anyone knowing a thing about it. So perhaps, just perhaps, all these "royal experts" *don't* have "inside sources"? Maybe all the thousands and thousands of columns and blogs and "exclusives" were just... bullshit?

If they were, it's great news for me because I'm about to join them in some wild speculation over the real reasons Harry and Meghan are returning to the UK. After all, it does seem odd: if you've had a huge bust-up with a sibling, as Harry has with William, it's awkward in the best of circumstances.

In Harry's case, it's even weirder, as he'll be returning to the orbit of a sibling who will eventually be his king. I know it's not Tudor times any more, and there's a lot less imprisoning in the Tower than there used to be, but still. In terms of sibling power dynamics, it's got to be hard to return to a country where your older brother will one day own all the seabeds and can requisition as many swans as he likes. Where your kids will be paying for stuff using tenners with the face of "grumpy Uncle William who broke the dog bowl" on them. Dude must have big reasons to put up with all that. But what are they?

One: The first series of *Bake Off* with Nigella Lawson starts in September. Sure, you can watch it in the States on Netflix, but there's usually a week-long delay. Harry's British and, as we all know, Meghan is into baking, so they will have felt an understandable impending fomo at the prospect of being at least a week behind on impassioned conversations about, eg a twinkie baker who epically screwed up their Florentines, or the razzy Indian mum who pulled a blinder on the quiche round. Nigella's tent debut is arguably the biggest cultural event in Britain since the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Olympics. To be on the other side of the world, on a week-long delay, would be agony. Ipso facto: Rightmove.

Two: Marks & Spencer is going through a golden age right now. Whether it's the High Waisted Crease Front Barrel Jeans in Dark Blue, the Foodhall's super-viral Chocolate and Pistachio Velvety Dip, or the iconic Picky Bits range, any true Englishman will feel a tingle that the Nation's Shop is going through an imperial phase. Why go to Erewhon in LA and spend £27 on a mad rutabaga smoothie when you can pop into an M&S on the M40 and have a cheese and Marmite sandwich for £3.25?

Three: Autumn. There's no autumn in California. Not really. After six years of palms and shorts, the Sussexes clearly yearn for cold snaps, Brora cashmere and daily debates on whether or not to turn the heating on yet. Eight years in, a couple need these comforting seasonal rituals just to have something to talk about. Indeed, marital small talk is dependent on discussing varying types of rain, the debut of this year's John Lewis Christmas ad, how you're not going to "do anything" for New Year's Eve — "Just watch the *Hootenanny* and get a cheeseboard in" — and whether it's "too early" to start planning next year's summer holiday, in Cornwall.

Without any of these topics available to Americans, I'm astonished that anyone over there stays married for more than a year. Of course Harry's come home: as the royal family's chattiest member and Britain's wealthiest Neet, he's just bored. He's come home for the banter.

easyJet is hiring over-50s! This is marvellous for someone like me. Maybe

Hilary Rose

"Hurrah for easyJet!" is up there with "Hurrah, a spider!" as something I am overwhelmingly unlikely to say. However, in a world of rampant ageism, where highly qualified midlifers on the job market can't even get an interview, the airline is launching a recruitment drive for the over-50s, after the success of its first, in 2022.

Recent recruits include a 61-year-old man who happily puts in 13-hour shifts at 37,000 feet instead of gliding smoothly into retirement, and a 64-year-old woman called Francesca Hicks. "Sometimes," she told The Sunday Times, "I get off a flight and feel like I've been to a party because I've had such good rapport with the passengers. I feel like I'm being paid to be sociable. It's amazing."

Hmm. The last time I flew orange I was sandwiched between a couple. I offered to swap but one of them would only sit by the window and the other preferred the aisle, so instead they talked over me all the way to Nice, while eating toasted cheese sandwiches with hot chocolate and red wine. It was 7am. The smell of that lives long in the memory, but "amazing" is not the word I would choose.

Back on the recruitment drive, according to Michael Brown, the airline's director of cabin services, "We want more candidates over 50 to apply as they not only bring their existing skills... but also a wealth of life experience." This is marvellous for someone like me, who is over 50, essentially unemployable, with no transferable skills and with life experiences that reflect poorly on all concerned. However, several things worry me about my exciting new high-altitude career, even as I rejoice that BA, Jet2 and Whizz also impose no upper age limit on recruits.

Francesca Hicks, centre, joined as part of the recruitment drive

For a start, easyJet orange is a lovely colour for all sorts of things, perhaps especially oranges, but it is not a lovely colour for me. It makes me look dead. Full make-up at 5am would be a challenge, as would talking. Then there are the airports. The only way I generally go to Gatwick, Stansted, Luton or wherever else easyJet flies from is kicking and screaming. I have "Heathrow" running through me like a stick of rock, because if I had to I could walk there. Putting me in a customer-facing role may require more training than Mr Brown has in mind, seeing as a friend once said that I effectively have "eff off" tattooed on my forehead. I try hard to look friendly to strangers, really I do, but honestly? It defeats me, and confronted with an order for toasted cheese sandwiches at dawn I'd be inclined to say, "Must you?"

Part of the intensive month-long training includes first aid, but I tend towards the view that you're probably fine, or exaggerating. My first thought would be to channel the matron at my nephew's old school who, informed that he had a headache, replied, "Oh, man up." On the plus side, I'd ace the swimming part. Swimming is one of the few things I can do well, so I'm confident I could save myself by swimming rapidly away from the burning fuselage in the event of watery disaster.

On the downside, I really couldn't care less if you're struggling to get your cabin bag in the overhead locker. You should have checked that you could lift it and packed less, like the rest of us. Although it does remind me of the only time I ever heard a flight attendant shout. We'd just taken off, the back wheels had barely left the ground, the plane was climbing steeply and one of my fellow passengers took the opportunity to unbuckle, stand up — with predictable difficulty — and rummage in the overhead locker for his bag.

It also reminds me that my best experience of easyJet wasn't a plane, it was a boat. Its founder, Stelios Haji-Ioannou, had repurposed one of his very rich family's spare ships, as you do. He painted the whole thing orange, called it easyCruise, and offered cheap deals round the Caribbean. It was a short-lived venture, but I was dispatched to interview him, which I duly did. The pursuit of truth clearly required me then to spend a week doing sod all, cruising round the Caribbean in a big orange boat. And that is how I once came to spend a working Monday doing sod all on the most beautiful beach I've seen in my life, on Anguilla. I've spent most of the intervening years unsuccessfully trying to return,, so if easyJet flies to Anguilla, you can sign me up as cabin crew. Just say a little prayer if it's me saying, "Welcome on board!"

My take on the classics

Swiss scientists have ranked Shakespeare's plays by their complexity and top of the list from ETH Zurich is *Antony and Cleopatra*. Having studied it for A-level, I can confirm that it was both boring and incomprehensible, and we conclude from this that Shakespeare is enormously overrated.

I have now compiled my own list of overrated classics. Dickens? Too long. Hardy? Too sad. George Eliot is thin, depressing gruel, and the tedium of DH Lawrence's *The Rainbow* stayed with me far longer than the plot. Turning our gaze further afield, I can only assume that Molière's comedies lose everything in translation, *The Divine Comedy* was a better band than poem, and Camus' *L'étranger* was baffling.

I accept this probably says more about me than it does about Dante or Camus, or indeed *L'étranger*, and yet, as ever, there's a lot to be said for Jilly Cooper.

She grabbed my boobs and was

Dolly Parton held nothing back when she met Katie Glass. In a frank exchange they discussed everything from her sexuality to her thoughts about death

COVER: LARSEN AND TALBERT/CONTOUR. BELOW: SHUTTERSTOCK; SPASH NEWS; ALAMY

Clockwise from above: Dolly Parton; a replica of her childhood home in her theme park Dollywood; performing in Tennessee in 1973; with her husband, Carl Dean

Did I want to go to Nashville and interview Dolly Parton? My editor at The Sunday Times asked me this in 2011, as one of my first big interviews for the paper. Abso-dolly-lutely!

We didn't have time to organise a journalism visa, so when I landed in Nashville and immigration officers opened my bag, found my Dictaphone and laptop and asked if I was working, I lied. Then they found the giant pile of newspaper articles about Dolly I'd been reading on the flight, and laughed: "She thinks she's going to interview Dolly Parton!", ushering me in.

Nashville is Dolly incarnate: joyful, fun, ambitious and gaudy. I arrived at the dense little music town, 200 miles from where the double-D goddess was born in the Appalachian Mountains, and spent my days waiting to meet her fraught with anticipation.

I set about experiencing everything Dolly (except sadly not her Dollywood theme park, which was shut). I visited a re-creation of the simple one-room shack she had been born in, in 1946, on the banks of the Little Pigeon River in Sevier County, Tennessee, before she headed to Nashville at 18.

I watched wannabe Dollies singing *Jolene* in honky-tonk bars and flirted with cowboys, thinking how Dolly met her husband, Carl Dean, the day she arrived in town, outside the Wishy Washy laundromat.

I found her star on the Music City Walk of Fame and her spangly outfits in the Country Music Hall of Fame, beside Elvis's blue suede shoes and Tammy Wynette's wigs, and toured her Nashville complex, surprisingly hippy with its dreamcatchers and Navajo throws, and her chapel, less surprising given her granddaddy was a hellfire Pentecostal preacher. And spied inside her custom-built $1 million tour bus complete with cupboards housing her Marie Antoinette-voluminous blonde wigs.

Her press team took me to "The Best Little Warehouse" in Nashville, crammed with Dolly memorabilia, and let me raid it, which I gleefully did. So in the months that followed back in my London flat-share, it became normal to enter the kitchen and find one flatmate in a Dolly T-shirt, another wrapped in a Dolly towel and another drinking from a Dolly mug. But I didn't get to meet Dolly, who was sick with a lung infection. I left disappointed.

A month later at the London Savoy, a voice sang out: "Are you Kay-tee?" It was Dolly herself! She was charisma on stilettos, tiny but magnificent enough to fill the room with her sparkle. One of the most famous celebrities I'd properly interviewed, sensing how nervous I was, she immediately moved sweetly to put me at ease, chirping: "Let me a find a lil napkin, get rid o' mah guhm... ah'll sit right here and you sit right there," hopping up on a sofa beside me, her tiny legs swinging two inches off the ground.

"I love your..." she grinned straight at my double-E chest, looking absurdly large that day because it was swaddled in a tight Nashville Dolly T-shirt. Then suddenly, properly clocking the image, she grabbed at my boobs, squealing: "Where'd you get that?"

Strained across my front was a rare image of young Dolly with hollow cheeks and natural hair. "That was when I was a young girl, that was one of my first sessions after I moved to

> **I may be a whore but I'm not gay! It wouldn't matter if I was**

Nashville when I was 18 or 19," she said happily, getting misty-eyed, "before all my hair got spoilt with all the wigs. Looks like my roots are showing! That's before false eyelashes and everything else." Before The Look, I say. "Yes.

"A lot of people say I would have been taken more serious as a singer and a songwriter if I hadn't been so outrageous, because most people just see me as tits and hair and overexaggerated clothes, but that's part of the fun for me," she later explained, adding she couldn't give two hoots. "I can't very well put my tits out there for everybody to see and then get mad if somebody makes a joke. I wanted them out there. Here they are! Say what you want to say. I just do what I do." She was every bit as brilliant in person as I'd hoped.

In some ways she was exactly as I expected: blonde, busty, bubbly — superficially an American Barbara Windsor, dolled up to the nines, her hand-span waist stitched into skin-tight leather trousers, knee-high stiletto boots, comedically large chest. In hindsight I regret now how much I (then an inexperienced journalist) wrote about her plastic surgery, but at the time I'd never seen someone with so much "work" and found how little her alabaster-white face moved shocking. Now I realise it was the least interesting thing about her.

In other ways she was nothing as I'd imagined. For a Christian woman in her sixties, she swore like a sailor — and was unbelievably frank. When I, impertinently, asked about rumours she was a lesbian, she hooted.

"I may be a whore but I'm not gay!" she said, laughing in her thick Southern drawl, then thoughtfully adding: "It wouldn't matter if I was! But I'm not, I've never had a desire for another woman in my life."

I asked if her "very country" parents had given her advice on showbiz. "Be honest, be fair and don't spread your legs!" she said, giggling, gleefully slapping a leather thigh. So later when Playboy offered her tons of cash to pose, she refused, only agreeing to a cover in 1978 wearing a bunny suit but never a "spread". "I always made a joke — you know, I might get naked when I'm 100 and then everybody'll be sorry!"

She was so charming and magnetic it was easy to fool myself into thinking we were mates. When I asked what she did at karaoke — "I don't really get out that much, to do that sort of stuff" — she wanted to know: "Do you sing to any of my songs?" Yes, *Islands in the Stream*. "Do you have a friend? Oh good!"

The classic take is to compare Dolly to Elvis, but to me there's no equivalence because she wrote nearly all of her songs, employing the great country music art of storytelling. Meeting her, I understood she was a real writer's writer, telling me she was constantly scribbling "longhand with my big old pad". She didn't care for computers or noisy typewriters. "I just love the ink on paper," she said, writing on her tour bus, on planes, in the bath.

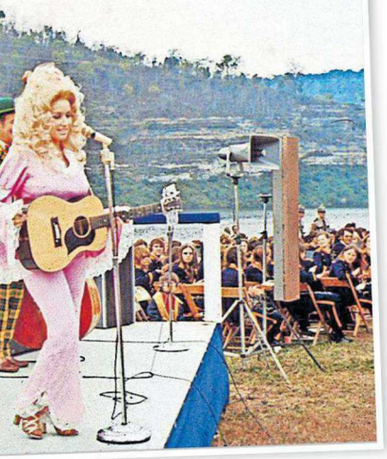
If she wasn't writing, she was reading. She didn't watch TV or listen to music at home. Instead she soaked up "at least 100 books a year", reading "everywhere, every day, anything".

Her love of literature grew from being raised in a largely illiterate family where the Bible was the only book. Her most incredible legacy, besides her music, and a tribute to her generosity, intellect and social conscience, is that in 1995 she started the Imagination Library — a charity giving free books to underprivileged children under five — in Tennessee. It has since spread to Canada, Australia, Ireland and the UK and has now given away more than 332 million books.

Dolly was 65 when we met and about to go on tour. "I see numbers and I think, who's 65? Me?!" She was full of plans, fantasising about working with Lady Gaga: "I'd love to do a duet... Always wanted to work with Madonna, but she never asked."

Having interviewed many celebrities

charisma on stilettos. I loved her



since, I now realise her warmth was so unusual, and, along with her candour, how reflective she was — taking the time to really consider my questions. When I asked if she was afraid of getting older, she told me she was only afraid of being ill. Otherwise, "I'm not vain enough or proud enough to worry about ageing. The numbers

> **I hope I can fall dead right in the middle of a song on stage**

don't bother me, because I will be the best 65 that I can be, or the best 75 or the best 85."

Did she think about death? "Sure, I think about death. But I think when I die I'll really be getting to live then because I believe that there is a greater place than this... We have to die, if the world lasts that long, unless we get swept up in the Rapture. I'm not so sure I'll be one of those selected few — I hope so."

She flitted between humour and depth, so when I asked if she had a funeral song, she cackled: "I don't know — but I won't be singing it!

"I'm not afraid of death," she said. "Well, I don't want to die, till it's time. But when I do I hope I don't have to suffer a lot. I hope I can fall dead right in the middle of a song on stage, doing something I love to do."

Dolly's greatest songs by Will Hodgkinson

With the notable exception of any chapters involving her famously private husband, Carl Dean, Dolly Parton's life was an open book. It was in her songs that she revealed herself to the world, from the twin forces of love and poverty shaping her upbringing in Pittman Center, Tennessee, to her no-nonsense brand of working-class feminism. Parton set herself up to be underestimated, from a gaudy image she based on "the town tramp" to always getting a self-deprecating joke in before anyone else could — and all the while being so damn likeable that you could be forgiven for missing the steely determination running through her work and career. Here are ten songs that tell the story of the best-loved woman in country music.

Dumb Blonde (1967)

Unlike most of her hits this wasn't self-penned — it was by the Nashville songwriter Curly Putman — but it provided her with the perfect opening gambit. "This dumb blonde ain't nobody's fool," Parton sings in that unmistakable Tennessee twang. Here was a tale of an abandoned woman whose former partner expects her to sit around after he's gone. Instead she delivers a defiant kiss-off: "Blondes have more fun." Porter Wagoner, riding high as country music royalty, took note and asked Parton to join him on his television show. Fame duly beckoned.

Just Because I'm a Woman (1968)

In the late Sixties country music was a notably prudish world, sticking up for marital tradition in the face of hippy permissiveness. It was left to Parton to reveal some unsaid truths and this pedal steel-laden honky-tonk ballad points out the double standards for men and women. "Now a man will take a good girl and he'll ruin her reputation/ But when he wants to marry, well, that's a different situation," she sings, before revealing herself to be the former good girl in question. In the plain language that became her stock in trade, Parton evokes tenderness while refusing to be a victim of circumstance.

Coat of Many Colors (1971)

Parton never tried to hide the poverty of her Tennessee mountain upbringing and in her breakthrough moment she spelt out the love her careworn parents did their best to fill the house with. The titular coat, compared to the one worn by Joseph in the Old Testament, is made from a collection of rags her mother has sewn together, and her daughter has never been prouder. "Although we had no money I was rich as I could be/ In my coat of many colors my mama made for me," she sings before running off to school, where all the children make fun of her. Parton wrote the song on a dry cleaning receipt because she didn't have any paper to hand, and it's hard to keep a dry eye as this tale of a hard luck life plays out.

ALAMY

Dolly Parton with Kenny Rogers in 1989. Below: at Glastonbury in 2014

Jolene (1974)

Parton's signature tune, since covered by everyone from Beyoncé to the White Stripes and widely accepted as one of the greatest country songs, captures an emotion familiar to us all: jealousy. The idea came from a fan called Jolene but inspiration hit after Parton's husband seemed to be getting a little too friendly with the local flame-haired bank teller. The genius is in the song addressing not the man but the "other woman": Parton is so pleading and heartfelt, as she accepts that she cannot match Jolene's considerable charms, that you cannot help but feel her pain.

I Will Always Love You (1974)

Written on the same day as *Jolene*, incredibly, and intended as a goodbye to Wagoner after Parton's increasing fame put a strain on their creative partnership, this has become one of the most popular love songs of all. It was a hit three times for Parton but it's the Whitney Houston cover from 1992, as featured in the film *The Bodyguard*, that cemented the song's place in music history: that version spent 14 weeks on the US Billboard Hot 100, inspiring countless karaoke renditions.

The Bargain Store (1975)

With characteristic self-deprecation Parton compares herself to damaged goods at knockdown prices before suggesting that old tat can prove better than the flashy new thing. "I can guarantee you'll be completely satisfied," she sings to a new lover, making a case for experience over innocence. As in all of Parton's best songs, it's authentic. She's been torn and frayed by past relationships but she's still filled with hope.

9 to 5 (1980)

In keeping with the workaholic culture of the new decade, Parton's first US Billboard Hot 100 No 1 was an ode to the tears and joys of the daily grind, bringing in a bit of irresistible country disco magic along the way. "What a way to make a livin'!" she blasts out on the chorus of a song written as the theme to the blockbuster comedy *9 to 5*, in which she starred alongside Lily Tomlin and Jane Fonda as beleaguered office workers taking revenge on their sexist boss.

Islands in the Stream (1983)

Parton didn't actually write her famous duet with Kenny Rogers, which is one of the most loved songs from the world of Nashville country. That honour goes to those distinctly non-country balladeers the Bee Gees. Nonetheless she and Rogers made the gorgeous melody and sweet tribute to everlasting love and companionship their own, even though the Bee Gees had intended it for an R&B singer. Barry Gibb said it was for Diana Ross, while his brother Robin claimed they wrote it with Marvin Gaye in mind. A No 1 hit, it cemented Parton's essentially wholesome image.

After the Gold Rush (1999)

Dolly does Neil Young? Yes, with the help of Emmylou Harris and Linda Ronstadt as Trio, whose 1987 debut album was a four million-selling hit. It demonstrated Parton's willingness to step beyond country and reach a baby boomer audience whose lives had been chronicled by the early Seventies singer-songwriter movement, and it is on Trio's returning album from 1999 that Parton delivers her standout moment. She gives her all to Young's time-travelling classic about ecological destruction, although she stops short of repeating his line "I felt like getting high". Admitting to getting stoned was, it seems, a step into hippydom too far.

If You Hadn't Been There (2025)

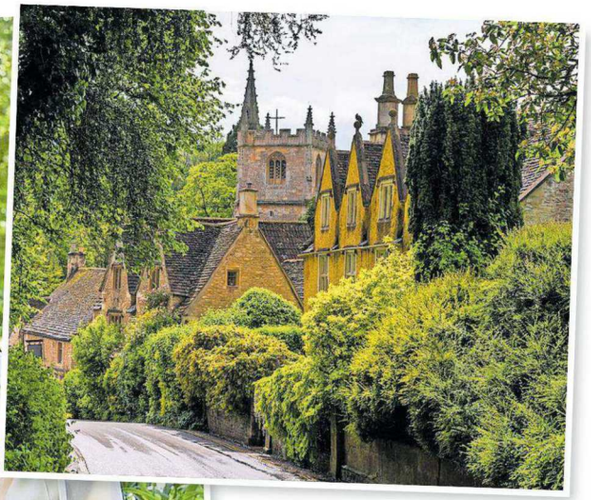
Among Parton's final recordings was a tribute to Dean, who had died a week previously. "The ups and downs we've always shared/ And I wouldn't be here if you hadn't been there," she sings in a whisper on a sentimental piano ballad, brimming with emotion, to the quiet, private man she had been married to since 1966. Dean stayed so far in the background, in fact, that long-denied rumours swirled around Parton's sexual orientation, not least because she was an outspoken supporter of the gay community. But there is no questioning the depth of feeling, expressed in the throes of grief, on one of Parton's last great songs.

What Harry will do as a stay-at-home dad in the Cotswolds

They're back! And the Duke of Sussex has plans to be a school-run father. Here's what he can expect, says local

Simon Mills

MEGHAN/INSTAGRAM; ALAMY



The Duke and Duchess of Sussex with their children, Archie and Lilibet. Top right: Castle Combe in the Cotswolds

Being a soccer mom or a full-time stay-at-home dad is a breeze on the west coast of America. If you are the Duke of Sussex, every day is an easy-going park and ride: saying hi to all the moms at the gate, scowling at the paparazzi, watching out for school shooters, getting shadowed by the sleeve-mic'd security detail, grabbing a skinny latte venti from the drive-through, then getting into a cardio workout with the PT at the home gym. The question is, will he be able to do all this when he moves back to the wilds of the Cotswolds? Will Americanised Prince Harry and his LA-raised, GB-disparaging wife fit in?

Well, yes — and perhaps a little easier than you'd think. With its cute artisanal stores, farmers' markets, myriad wellness opportunities, Ellen DeGeneres star-spots, coffee shops, spas and malls, much of the Cotswolds feels a lot like the west coast of America these days. In this rarefied Californishire environment Harry may find that his "full-time dad" lifestyles in Montecito and here aren't so very different. (OK, maybe the weather will be.)

The Cotswolds and California are both car-centric places — cortado, Pilates, cocktails, organic meat and the cinema are all a 20-minute drive from wherever you are. So I reckon Harry is going to need some decent wheels to get him and his security detail from matcha station to bakery to 3pm kiddies' collect. A limited-edition Range Rover Burford (£275,600 — and yep, they named a luxury SUV after a Cotswolds market town) would be nice, and its tinted windows would keep Meghan happy, but for school-run cred he'd be much better off with something way cooler. A two-door restomod Range Rover from the specialists Kingsley Cars on the A40 is what he needs — stealthy, leather-upholstered, 100 per cent British.

After school, padel. That's the parental schedule in these parts. Padel is the new golf, where dad fun is had, deals are done and rotator cuffs are irreparably damaged. An excellent spot to play would be the multiple facilities at the Club, Lady Bamford's gym and health spa at Daylesford. There are three courts and, with a private entrance and members-only car park at the back, none of the muggles buying sourdough at the front of Daylesford's retail campus will ever know he's there. He might get a game with Pete Tong, Eddie Redmayne, Princess Eugenie or Princess Beatrice, who are all members.

> **"Padel is the new golf, where deals are done and rotator cuffs are damaged**

If Harry's core requires it, a testing workout at Chloe's Pilates at the Old Coal Yard just outside Chipping Norton is essential. Then again, maybe not — the singer Ellie Goulding, a former Harry squeeze, is a regular on the mats here so perhaps the online sessions would cause less trouble.

For Sunday lunches with the children? Despite Meghan being very matey with Markus Anderson, Soho House's global membership director, the privacy-centric Harry may find Soho Farmhouse a bit of a zoo at the weekends, when it's packed full of boozy 24-year-olds with backpacks and nu mullets. A better option may be Estelle Manor. It's more child-friendly, with miniature Land Rover Defender cars and a children's play zone that looks as if it was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, as well as an adventure paddock and aviaries with farm animals and birds of prey. Best of all, Estelle knows how to host celebrities. When Kim Kardashian and Lewis Hamilton visited recently, management cancelled all scheduled events, closed off whole areas of the hotel to the public and banned camera phones and social media posts. Yay!

Need one of the wife's beloved PJs to whisk the family off to Comporta, Portugal, for the weekend? Harry will find world-class private jet services at Kemble's Cotswold airport, once home to the Red Arrows aerobatics team. Conveniently located near Cirencester, and his father's (and Princess Anne's) favoured rural aviation hub, Kemble is... oh, hang on. Harry had best avoid that particular airspace altogether because the Cotswold airport's chief executive is the glamorous Suzannah Harvey, a former model who had a fling with the young prince in 2002, kissing him "passionately" at the Beaufort Hunt Christmas ball. He was 17, she was 23. So it could be, like, a bit awks in the departure lounge.

They may have flown in to Birmingham airport but if the former HRH wants to spoil his kids and ship the family's black labrador retriever Pula and beagle Mia over from California, then Oxford airport, where more super luxe Lears and Bombardiers are fuelling up, is only a seven-mile Maybach cruise from Charlbury. Here all sizes of dogs (and cats) roam free and uncaged on private jets, taking advantage of what operators like to call "furs class".

Now he's back in the rainy UK, Harry's wardrobe may need a tweak too. Yes, there are California-style Under Armour ninja/tech bro types in Tetbury, but to fall in with the fast farmer set of Jeremy Clarkson, Alex James, Fiona Howden et al, his clothes need to be less Lululemon and more preppy/muddy: a little bit country, a little bit rock'n'roll, modern luxe mixed with battered old corduroys, cashmere and wellingtons.

Bicester Village, a designer discount destination, is Harry's one-stop shop. Campus-sized and every bit as dreamy as Malibu Country Mart, Bicester is like a clap-boarded, California-ised iteration of the TK Maxx next to Kensington Palace where Harry used to buy his clothes. To combine fashion, insulation and impermeability, Harry should head for Acne Studios, Brunello Cucinelli, Hackett, Ralph Lauren, Burberry and the North Face. And, once nursing a flat white from Ralph's Coffee truck, he should pop in to Holland Cooper, where he can pick up some contemporary country wear for Meghan designed by the local girl Jade Holland Cooper.

Of course, Blenheim Palace at Woodstock (seat of the dukes of Marlborough and birthplace of Winston Churchill) is irrefutably magnificent and there's a cracking dinosaur exhibition on in the grounds at the moment. Meghan may also be surprised to learn that the UK's biggest crocodile zoo — Crocodiles of the World — is just outside Burford.

All good Cotswolds dad days end with a drink at the village pub. And there are dozens, no, hundreds of them, mostly named the Bull or the Bell. The Bull at Charlbury is always starry, dark and delicious, with an open fire, Orkney Chairs, milking stools and rolltop baths — and some of the very best food in the area. Kamala Harris had lunch here last summer. Boris Johnson once did the midnight countdown duties on New Year's Eve. And Harry will doubtless feel at home, not least because the Bull's landlord is called Philip Winser.

THONG BIKINIS FROM A SELECTION AT TRIANGL.COM

Never mind the buttocks! Have we hit peak bottom?

Bums have become a status symbol: I used to wear bikini briefs but now, at nearly 40, I want as little fabric as possible, says Charlie Gowans-Eglinton

If you've been anywhere near a beach in the past five years then you can't have failed to notice that we've reached peak bum. Topless sunbathing is out and nearly bottomless sunbathing is in. It's a charge led by Gen Z, but see also the Instagram posts of Kylie Minogue, 58, sunbathing in a tiny yellow bikini, and Elizabeth Hurley, 61, swimming off the side of a boat in a tiny white one, neither of whom seems to have any intention of going gentle into that good, sensible high-waisted brief marketed to the over-40s. My friend has just been holidaying in Spain and didn't see a single woman of any age wearing a "full coverage" bikini bottom. When she rang for a chat, she found me beside the sea on the Greek island of Symi, arse definitely out.

It might feel like too many buttocks if you're just trying to read your book on the beach. But this isn't about sex, at least not entirely. Older generations might be aghast to see string bikinis that are all string, no substance, but then baby boomers were the ones to popularise topless sunbathing.

That the preferred style of bikini bottom — as modelled by Hailey Bieber Baldwin in Calzedonia's latest campaign — is now called a Brazilian is telling, as is the Brazilian butt lift (BBL) surgery needed for many to achieve the look. The tiny bottom was a Eurocentric status symbol in an era of extreme thinness when any celebrity over a size 10 was in danger of making the "circle of shame" on the cover of Heat magazine.

The beauty norm has changed quickly and dramatically: it was in 2011 that a back view of Pippa Middleton carrying Kate's train on the way to the

> **The giant briefs I used to go for looked like Spanx, or a nappy**

aisle became global news; by today's standards, her "buoyant bum" (LA Times) would be barely perceptible.

We have Kim Kardashian's figure to thank for that. Her extreme hourglass shape was all about the bum and coincided with the availability of tweakments such as silicone bum injections and the BBL — either silicone implants or the injection of fat liposuctioned from elsewhere in the body (the latter has a fatality rate of more than 1 in 4,000). #BBL now appears in 3.1 million Instagram posts and 875,000 TikToks.

For as little as £300, cheaper filler injections — "the lunchtime butt lift" — come with less risk and less recovery time, and results that last up to two years. A BBL may cost about £10,000. It sounds terrifying to me, but we're increasingly desensitised: I know lots of men and women who regularly have Botox, weight-loss injections and whatever's the latest beauty craze on Harley Street.

Among Gen Z the workout goal is strong, not skinny. In 2000 a study recorded that less than 10 per cent of women did strength training with any regularity; in 2023 a study of 400,000 women globally found that that had risen to 40 per cent. And while much of Gen Z's focus is on the benefits to both mental and physical health, that generation's workout influencers share their resulting bum benefits with followers too.

Last month in Hydra, one of Greece's Saronic islands, another friend was bottom-obsessed. Having spent the past few years since pregnancy working with a personal trainer, she would now whisper hopefully, "Is my bum like hers?" to me whenever she saw a woman built along similar lines. A mutual friend's exceptional bottom — part genetics, part thanks to the hours a week she spends in the gym — is her holy grail, or perhaps holy tail, motivating her to lunge and squat and generally gyrate around her local park every week, rain or shine.

When I was about 30, I bought into the high-waisted bikini bottom trend that promised to be so "flattering" — and a chic, grown-up alternative to the little bikinis I associated with teenagers and twentysomethings. I bought two bikinis from the chic Australian label Matteau, one brown, one blue-grey, both for more than I'd ever spent on a swimsuit, or ten swimsuits. The fabrics and finish were lovely but on me the result was that goo-goo-ga-ga adult baby fetish, just missing a dummy. The giant briefs looked at best like Spanx, at worst like a nappy.

Now that I am nearly 40, I have made a U-turn and am looking for as little fabric as possible. Packing for my second beach holiday of the summer, I beelined for Calzedonia, hoping to buy the Brazilian bikini bottoms to match the tops I'd bought for the first, to replace the "regular" cut bottom halves I'd chosen a month earlier. When I'd bought them in London, trying them on under fluorescent lights, they'd looked minuscule. After five minutes on the bare-arsed beach, I felt geriatric in my briefs and so spent the next ten days trying to contort them into something briefer (which, yes, involves a semi-wedgie). I am apparently in good company, as the Brazilians had sold out in every size.

Among the millennial friends I am holidaying with, one friend has a drawer full of Brazilian bikini bottoms, another micro Hunza G stretch sets. Only one of us has worn a one-piece, and it was a sexy scalloped-edge black suit a million miles from the "sculpt", "tummy control" and "slimming" swimsuits marketed towards women in middle age. I own two of those and packed neither. Instead, a few weeks ago I added a step to my beauty regime. For years I've applied an anti-ageing prescription retinoid to my face, neck, décolletage and the back of my hands. Now a generous layer goes on my arse too. Results to follow — literally.

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arts

‘All of us suffered’ — the return of Fauda after the Hamas massacre

The creators of the Israeli hit show tell Anne Joseph why they had to confront the October 7 attacks — and how they were caught up in the real war

Avi Issacharoff and Lior Raz, the co-creators of the Israeli hit TV show *Fauda*, could not ignore the devastating events of October 7, 2023, when Hamas terrorists invaded and attacked Israel, killing more than 1,200 Israelis and taking 251 hostages into Gaza. “You can’t do a show like *Fauda* that deals with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and with reality in the Middle East without touching on such a major event,” says Issacharoff, 53. “You don’t have the right. No matter which perspective, the Israeli or the Palestinian, it changed things dramatically in the region.”

But a few months before the attacks, when Raz, who also stars as the lead character, Doron Kabilio, had suggested a terrorist invasion of Israel as a plot line for the fifth series of *Fauda*, Issacharoff, a journalist, writer and Middle East analyst, had rejected it. “There was a discussion and I thought the idea wasn’t realistic enough. And then suddenly, everything you thought was too dark a scenario was not even close to what happened.” They scrapped their previous storyline, revising the script to reflect the global and domestic aftermath of the atrocities and how the characters struggle with the effects of trauma.

Both men are speaking to me from Israel, Issacharoff from his home in Tel Aviv and Raz from his car. Writing has been, and is, a form of catharsis. “What we’ve done with *Fauda*, not just this season, is try to heal our wounds through creating, shooting and acting in it,” says Raz, 54. The show may be an imagined reality, based on an amalgam of true stories, but its premise is based on the experiences of its creators. Raz served in an elite undercover counterterrorism unit during his mandatory army service, similar to the one depicted in *Fauda*, and Issacharoff was stationed in the West Bank. For series five, they undertook wider research to make it as authentic as possible. “I think that most people who watch the show will feel that it is,” Issacharoff says.

Top: Lior Raz and Yaakov Zada-Daniel in the new series of Fauda. Above: Idan Amedi, who played Sagi, speaking at a press conference in January 2024 after being injured while serving as a reservist. Right: the cast of the first series

This is *Fauda* — the word means chaos in Arabic — at its most personal, intense and traumatic, and it is the strongest season since the show first aired in 2015. Set two years after October 7, it follows Eli (Yaakov Zada-Daniel) and Salem (Byan Anteer) to Marseille on an off-grid revenge mission against a Hamas terrorist responsible for the murder of members of their families. A broken Doron (Raz) is coaxed out of retirement as a special forces agent to stop them and, with his unit colleagues, becomes drawn into a highly dangerous deep cover operation. The French actress Mélanie Laurent (*Inglourious Basterds*) and the French-Algerian actor Hakim Djaziri (*La Mosaïque*) join the cast.

Directed by Omri Givon and co-written with Omri Shenhar (*Tehran*), the 11-episode series premiered on Israeli TV in May. Although much of the action takes place in 2025, episodes seven and eight focus solely on October 7, 2023, taking the characters through their experiences of that day. They portray much of the reality, albeit briefly, but the most distressing storyline is witnessing what happens to one family, trapped in a safe room in their kibbutz on the Gaza border. These two raw, unflinching standalone episodes carry a content warning — a first for *Fauda* — which acknowledges that they may be difficult for some viewers to watch and can be skipped without affecting the flow of the rest of the narrative.

Not only was part of the series shot in southern Israel during the first phase of the war with Iran, filming these graphic, docu-style episodes was also emotionally challenging. “Honestly you’re like this,” Issacharoff says, demonstrating a trembling hand.

“Acting was hard because all of us suffered or were part of these events and the war,” Raz says. “We had moments when actors were just devastated, including me.”

He tells me that his friend Idan Amedi — who played Sagi in previous series and was due to be in this one — was seriously injured in an explosion in January 2024 while serving on army reserve duty in Gaza. Matan Meir, one of the series producers, was killed in a blast from a booby-trapped tunnel in December 2023. The first episode of the new series is dedicated to him. Surprisingly, while filming there was no on-set mental health support for the cast and crew. Instead, Raz says, they had each other. “We were like a support group,” he says. “We shared every day and night about what we’d experienced whilst filming.”

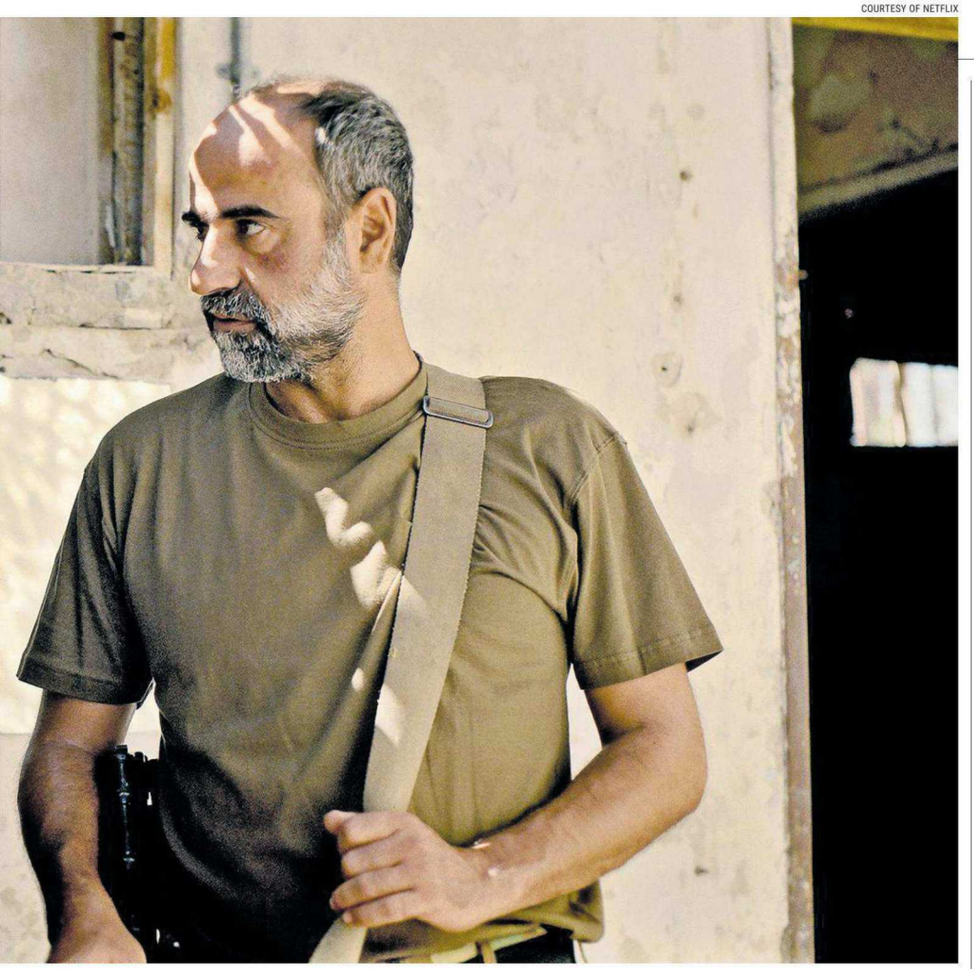
Fauda has never shied away from brutality but where were their boundaries this time? “We didn’t want to do a snuff TV show [one that depicts scenes of actual murder committed or set up by the film-makers],” Issacharoff says. “Sometimes a hint that there were sexual attacks, without seeing them, is enough. You don’t need to be graphic for the average audience to understand what happened.”

There is no mistaking the change in the character of Doron. Previously tense, trigger-happy and unpredictable, his mood was one of anger and impatience. Now, struggling with PTSD, he seems vulnerable: a softer, kinder man. Raz has said that he brings a little of himself into all the characters he plays, but which aspects of him are Doron here? He pauses before replying. “A lot, because in real life I’m very emotional, so bringing Doron to this situation is bringing me to it,” he says. “When we were writing, it was important to Avi and me that Doron would start the show differently from before. He’s in therapy, he’s post-traumatic. He’s no longer the guy who runs towards the fire. All he wants is to go back home. And this is very similar to me. Home is more important than anything else.”

On October 7 Issacharoff was at home, woken at 6.29am by the sound of sirens and rockets. A fluent Arabic speaker, he says he immediately switched on Al Jazeera and learnt that Hamas had declared war on Israel and was calling its allies in Lebanon and the West Bank to join them and fight. “After a few hours we slowly learnt about the scope of this terrible day,” he says.

Raz was in Romania. He received an early morning phone call from his sister in one of the kibbutzim on the

COURTESY OF NETFLIX



Gaza border, telling him they were in the bomb shelter. "She said there were terrorists around the house and her son was waiting for them with knives," he says. Only later would he find out that the kibbutz's local security team had successfully fought off the attackers.

He flew home and, two days after the attacks, he and Issacharoff travelled south to volunteer with Brothers and Sisters in Arms, an organisation set up to oppose the Israeli government's judicial reforms, and which pivoted on October 7 to provide aid and relief to civilians affected by the attacks. They helped people stuck in their homes, collecting them by car and taking them to a safe place.

"In one of those drives, it was night-time and there were sirens and rockets falling like crazy," Issacharoff says. "We called this woman and when she came out of her house she saw Lior and said, 'Oh my God, it's Doron from *Fauda*,'" he recalls, laughing. "If it hadn't been so sad, it would've been funny."

Fauda has been praised for its ability to present the paradox of the militant enemy: showing their weaknesses and capacity for love as well as their capacity to murder. But when I suggest that the nuance evident in previous seasons between Israelis and Palestinians is now largely absent, Raz partly disagrees. "We begin with a Bedouin Muslim guy whose son was murdered on October 7, so it's not that we don't show the Muslim side as well," he says.

The story also addresses the complexity of the relationship between Anne (Laurent) and her husband, who is a Hamas leader in France. "You see him together with her, all lovey-dovey. You understand their love story. It's not that you don't see it, you do. Then, later, you don't really know if he's a good guy or not. But for us, this is our narrative. It was very hard to have a narrative of the other side after October 7. We cannot sympathise and empathise with Hamas who massacred Israelis."

> **If you try to boycott someone because of where they come from and their religion, you're not an artist**

The new series of *Fauda* is released on Netflix on Sep 8

This season of *Fauda* appears at a moment when there are continuing and increasing calls to boycott Israeli art and artists. Raz and Issacharoff say it is not something they have experienced. As cofounders and co-CEOs of the company Faraway Road Productions, they are still doing business all over the world, Issacharoff says.

Nor does Raz feel it as an actor. Since the war he has appeared in Ridley Scott's *Gladiator II* and Daniel Roher's *Tuner*, with Dustin Hoffman and Leo Woodall, and was recently shooting a film in Athens. "How can you be an artist and try to boycott other artists?" he says. "It's ridiculous. Artists are supposed to be open-minded. If you try to boycott someone because of where they come from and their religion, you're not an artist."

When they write they do not think about the audience and how it will be received, he continues. "We think about how to tell a good story and about what we want to say." Regardless, there will be viewers who will criticise the show and its perspective.

Raz is unfazed. "There'll be a range of opinions, including from people who don't like anything that comes from Israel," he says. "If people love it and feel connected — it is our point of view — we're blessed. If not, it's their problem... we're just doing our best to bring our art to the world. You can criticise Israel, you can criticise us, you can criticise the Palestinians, but at the end of the day, it's a TV show, nothing else."

What a viral post tells us about the kindness of boys

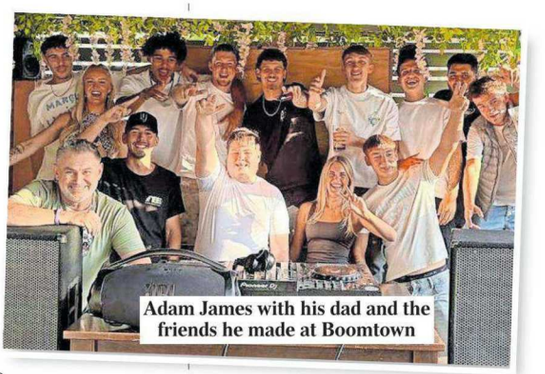
Lads at a festival befriended a young man with autism. Bridget Harrison salutes them

In the daily rounds of depressing news and AI slop on Instagram, it's rare to come across stories that revive one's faith in humanity, so when you do, it's no wonder they go viral.

The latest is the story of Adam James, a 23-year-old autistic aspiring drum'n'bass DJ from High Wycombe, who went alone to Boomtown festival in Hampshire last weekend. When he lent his mallet to a bunch of lads from Bristol who were pitching their tents next to him he was taken under their wing.

Adam went on to have "the best weekend of his life", according to his father, Andy James, who took to Facebook to thank the boys — and their parents — for something amazing they "probably didn't even know their kids had done". The post soon had 29,600 likes.

Andy wrote that he had been concerned that Adam was going alone to his first-ever festival after saving all year for a ticket, but his fears had "melted away" thanks to these young strangers. The story was picked up and posted on Instagram by BBC West. It soon garnered a million likes and 21,000 comments, and was reposted more than 53,000 times. Dozens of TikTok and Instagram accounts quickly followed up the story.



Adam James with his dad and the friends he made at Boomtown

My own 16-year-old son is off to Reading this weekend, albeit with a group of friends. I am determined not to obsess too much over all the bad things that might befall him. Reports of spikings, tents set on fire, fights and peer pressure to buy drugs are, of course, real concerns and I certainly plan to give him a detailed talking to before he leaves. But as someone who once enjoyed festivals, the most important thing to remind him is not only to stay away from ketamine, but to be kind — both to his pals and anyone else who looks a bit lost.

I watched the Adam James reel several times. Here were such typical lads, tops off, low-slung jorts, man bags, bucket hats, all dancing together. In other circumstances they could have been written off as oblivious party heads. Until they recounted their story.

Adam said: "They could have just ignored me. But the fact that they saw that I was on my own and they took me in, it was just amazing. I've never met such a good bunch of people in my life."

Then one of the Bristol lads, Ciaran Herniman, spoke and seemed genuinely fond of Adam: "Straight away we moved his tent into our circle, and he said, 'Are you sure about me jumping in with you boys?' And I said of course, without a doubt, it's not even questionable."

Then there was the lads' reaction to Adam's admission that he had autism. "They didn't judge me for a second," Adam said.

Herniman said: "He just opened up and said, 'Oh mate, just to let you know I've got quite high levels of autism.' We would never judge no one about that because we've got stuff ourselves. I have quite high ADHD, so it was nice that he was able to do that." It's easy to criticise Gen Z's eagerness to label their mental health issues. In this case, their openness helped. Many posts have also referred to how these lads emanated the kindness of the original raver generation, with 1990s dance culture all about loving strangers.

Possibly. But for me this feelgood story demonstrates a more important point. Young men get a bad rap so much of the time. My sons, aged 16 and 18, have grown up in an era of peak fears about the manosphere and toxic masculinity. We're quick to assume that modern boys are misogynistic, predatory, ruined by porn and obsessed with looksmaxxing.

Often when I express to my sons my fears about the negative influences on them, they roll their eyes and say, "Mum, most of us just aren't like that." They're decent kids, who feel unfairly pigeonholed and misjudged. I've had troops of young lads coming through my house over the years. True, they do often try to talk as if they are in a gang, and I want to pull up their low-slung trousers. But mostly I'm struck by how respectful they are and how kind they are to each other.

All "faith in humanity" stories are a tonic, but one involving young men feels particularly moving. It's probably no surprise, then, that the good news has continued. Pete Tong's DJ Academy has offered Adam a DJing course. Meanwhile, Boomtown has asked him to play a set there next year.

A cynical PR move? No doubt. But I'll enjoy the glow of it for now and wish my own son the time of his life at Reading. Maybe he'll make a few new friends too.

times2

Your weekday brain boost

More puzzles
Pages 14-16

Every day, Monday to Thursday, a page of extra puzzles to give your brain an extended workout

Samurai medium

Fill each grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Where the puzzles overlap, the rows and columns do not go beyond their usual length.

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Sudoku difficult

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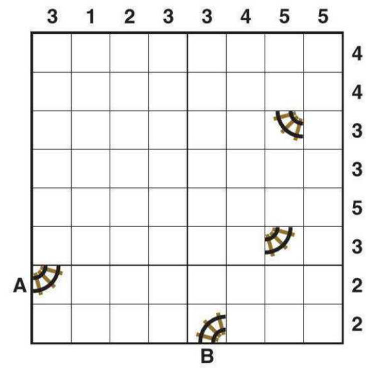
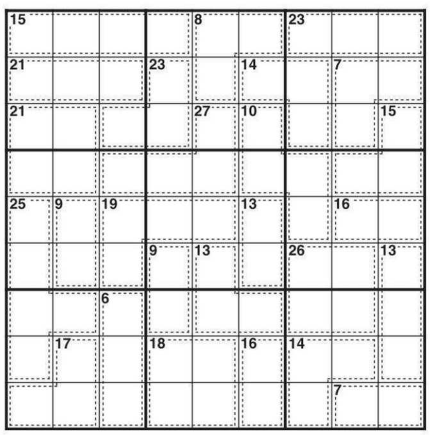
Train Tracks

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.



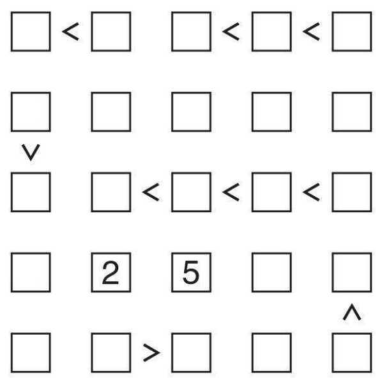
Killer deadly

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

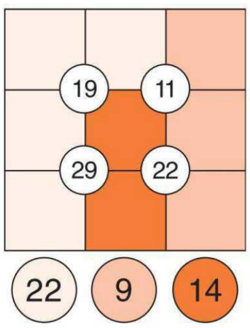


Futoshiki

Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.



Sakuro

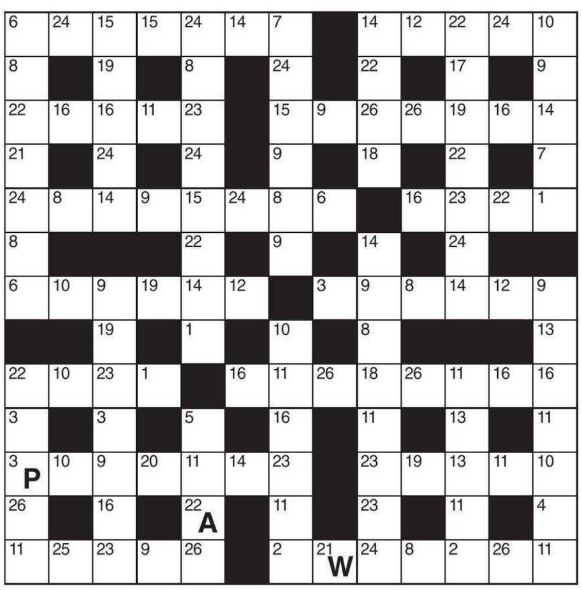


Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

Play Mini Sudoku every day Monday-Sunday online at thetimes.com and on Live app

Codeword

Every letter in the crossword-style grid, right, is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded.



~~A~~ B C D E F G H I J K L M N O ~~P~~ Q R S T U V ~~W~~ X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
		P										
14	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**	**24**	**25**	**26**
							W	A				

Mini Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x2 box contains the digits 1 to 6

		3	1		
	1			6	
2					4
1					6
	4			2	
		5	4		

Solutions in Monday's Times2

Yesterday's solutions

SAMURAI

5	7	8	1	2	6	3	9	4				8	1	4	6	2	5	3	9	7
2	3	9	4	7	5	8	6	1				5	6	9	7	3	8	4	2	1
1	4	6	9	3	8	2	7	5				3	2	7	1	9	4	8	6	5
7	6	5	2	4	3	9	1	8				6	8	5	3	1	2	9	7	4
4	1	2	7	8	9	6	5	3				4	7	1	5	8	9	2	3	6
8	9	3	6	5	1	4	2	7				2	9	3	4	7	6	1	5	8
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9	8	1	3	6	7	5	4	2	1	6	9	7	3	8	2	6	1	5	4	9
						2	1	3	6	5	8	4	9	7						
						8	9	4	3	1	7	6	2	5						
						6	7	5	9	2	4	3	8	1						
2	1	9	6	7	3	4	5	8	7	9	6	2	1	3	7	9	6	5	8	4
3	4	7	8	5	2	9	6	1	2	3	5	8	7	4	1	3	5	6	9	2
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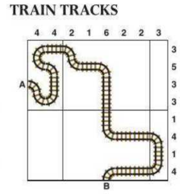
1	9	2	5	3	8	6	7	4				7	5	8	9	2	1	3	4	6
7	8	5	4	9	6	2	1	3				4	9	6	8	5	3	2	7	1
4	6	3	7	2	1	8	9	5				1	3	2	6	7	4	9	5	8

SAKURO

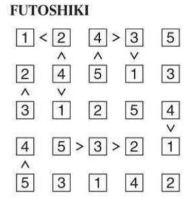
MINI SUDOKU

6	5	1	2	4	3
2	3	4	6	5	1
4	6	3	1	2	5
5	1	2	4	3	6
1	4	5	3	6	2
3	2	6	5	1	4

TRAIN TRACKS



FUTOSHIKI



SUDOKU

1	2	5	6	7	9	3	8	4
6	3	4	1	5	8	7	2	9
7	9	8	4	3	2	6	5	1
8	5	6	2	4	7	1	9	3
2	7	1	3	9	6	8	4	5
9	4	3	8	1	5	2	7	6
5	8	7	9	6	1	4	3	2
3	6	9	7	2	4	5	1	8
4	1	2	5	8	3	9	6	7

KILLER

2	6	4	9	1	7	8	5	3
1	7	9	8	5	3	6	4	2
3	8	5	2	6	4	1	7	9
9	4	7	5	3	1	2	6	8
6	2	3	7	4	8	5	9	1
8	5	1	6	9	2	7	3	4
5	9	8	4	2	6	3	1	7
7	1	6	3	8	9	4	2	5
4	3	2	1	7	5	9	8	6

CODEWORD

The crème de la crème of cosy crime is back

Carol Midgley TV review

Bookish
U&Alibi
★★★★★

The last time I reviewed *Bookish* I said that the lead character, Gabriel Book, played by Mark Gatiss, was its absolute powerhouse and it wouldn't deliver anywhere near the same delightful kick without him. Well, he has given himself competition in this new series, at least for the first episode. Jason Watkins delivers a corking performance as Harold Sneed, a dodgy medium who pretends to be possessed by spirits while for some reason wearing a ludicrous Max Wall-style black wig.

The scenes in which he hammily grunts and honks as the spirits "inhabit" his body are grotesque but hilarious. It's a great pity that he is murdered right at the beginning, but happily we see him a great deal in flashback and it is a monstrous treat.

Here, Gatiss, who wrote *Bookish* as well as starring in it, has taken the cosy crime genre and improved it, layering it with tiers of spice, melancholy, postwar politics and astute observations on the human condition to create a classy and delicious nostalgia series with menacing inner depths. For those who didn't see series one, it is set in 1946 London, where Book runs a second-hand bookshop called Book's, which makes for debate about the jarring apostrophe, which in this instance is obviously correctly placed.

The real emotional bite comes from the fact that Book's happy, amiable marriage to his childhood friend Trottie (a powerful Polly Walker) is a lavender one. Homosexuality was illegal then. Later in the series we see some of the dangers he faces. Trottie is happy to protect him in their loving but separate lives. She must have needs of her own, though, and in this series her eye seems to have been gladdened by a widowed colonel, Reggie Winters (Rupert Graves), who takes her out to tea. Does he know the secret of her marriage?

This was a cracking first episode, with Rosie Cavaliero also providing dark comedy punch as the mother of a son who died from a morphine overdose and who, in her grieving, vulnerable state, turns to Sneed to communicate with her son from beyond the grave.

Surprise, surprise, comforting the bereaved is not high on Sneed's agenda. There is an exquisite face-off between Sneed and Book when the latter tells Sneed, in his perfect cut-glass English, that he is a "grief leech", and that he and his ilk are "filthy, crooked, mendacious, disgusting pigs". But there is something about the slimy Sneed's response that suggests he knows something about Book's sexuality. It's a great episode.

You can tell the calibre of this series by the high-quality actors who are in it, sometimes only in small parts. This series will feature guest appearances from Miranda Richardson, Claire Skinner, Michael Simkins and Simon Callow. The tearjerking element of the series is Book's protégé, Jack, searching for Felix, the German father he never knew and with whom Book was in love. Their plan is to get permission to travel to Germany to find out what happened to him.

This elegant piece of work is the crème de la crème of cosy crime. Gatiss has created a world that is evocative and sinister — and in which I want to immerse myself time and time again.

NICOLA YOUNG

Mark Gatiss as the crime-solving bookshop owner Gabriel Book

Radio choice

Drama: You and Me, Us and Them
Radio 4, 2.15pm

Lucy Catherine's drama is not an easy listen but it's certainly a worthwhile one. A working-class mum (Claire-Louise Cordwell, *above*) is a teaching assistant whose right-wing views lead her to be fired from her job. She is also having problems with her 17-year-old daughter, Marie (Maddie Evans), who not only despises her mother's beliefs but also comes out as nonbinary, moves in with her friend and their middle-class parents and attends rallies that her mother hates. Can the pair ever find a place where they can meet in the middle and have a better relationship?
Clair Woodward

Times Radio

Digital, web, smart speaker, app

5.00am James Kitchin **6.00** Kate McCann and Calum Macdonald with Breakfast **10.00** Hugo Rifkind **1.00pm** Daniel Finkelstein **2.00** Jane Garvey **4.00** John Pienaar with Drive **7.00** Kait Borsay **10.00** Henry Bonsu **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

Radio 2

FM: 88-90.2 MHz

6.30am The Breakfast Show **9.30** Mark Goodier **12.00** Tina Daheley **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Jason Manford **7.00** Jo Whiley **9.00** Dolly Parton at the BBC **10.00** Melvin Odoom **12.00** OJ Borg **3.00am** Dance Sounds of the 90s (r) **4.00** Owain Wyn Evans

Radio 3

FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz

6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live
The Philharmonia Orchestra in Bernstein and Gershwin at the Proms. From the BBC Proms — Leonard Bernstein (Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*); From Cheltenham Music Festival — Brahms (Clarinet Trio in A minor, Op. 114); From the BBC Proms — Joan Tower (*Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman*); Gershwin, orch. Grofé (*Rhapsody in Blue*); From Cheltenham Music Festival — Bruch (Four Pieces for Clarinet, Cello and Piano, Op. 83 — Nos. 1, 2, 6 and 7); From the BBC Proms — Britten (*Simple Symphony*, Op. 4); From the Mozart Festival Würzburg — Prokofiev (*Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 75 — excerpts); From the BBC Proms — Stravinsky (Symphony of Wind Instruments)
4.00 Composer of the Week: Sally Beamish
Donald Macleod joins Sally Beamish at her home on the south coast of England, and explores her growing success as a composer
5.00 In Tune
6.00 Live BBC Proms 2026
The Met Orchestra under Yannick Nézet-Séguin performs Mahler, including his *Rückert-Lieder* with soprano Joyce diDonato and the Fourth Symphony. Presented by Martin Handley, live from the Royal Albert Hall. Saariaho (*Lumière et pesanteur*); Mahler (*Rückert-Lieder*); **7.30pm** Interval **7.50pm** Mahler (Symphony No. 4 in G)
8.10 BBC Proms 2026
The North East young people's choir Voices of the River's Edge and the BBC Singers perform contemporary choral music. Recorded in Gateshead last month
10.15 Live BBC Proms 2026
Erland Cooper, the City of London Sinfonia and director Alexandra Wood perform music inspired by nature and landscape, live from the Royal Albert Hall
11.45 'Round Midnight
Jazz-funk maestro James Mason spotlights an album that had a profound impact
12.30am Through the Night

Radio 4

FM: 92.4-94.6 MHz

5.00am News Summary
5.04 Sideways (7/8) (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today
9.00 Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics (5/7)
9.30 The Guitar Story (4/4)
10.00 Woman's Hour
Presented by Anita Rani
11.00 This Cultural Life
John Wilson talks to the pianist Mitsuko Uchida (2/18)
11.45 Book of the Week:
All the Beauty in the World
By Patrick Bringley (4/5)
12.04pm Scam Secrets (5/8)
12.32 Dough
The shift to digital money (1/5)
1.00 The World at One
1.45 Human Intelligence
Naomi Alderman explores Fatema Mernissi's ideas on voice and power (9/10)
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Choice Drama: You and Me, Us and Them
By Lucy Catherine
3.00 Open Country
Martha Kearney spends a day on a river pilgrimage in Kent (2/7)
3.27 Radio 4 Appeal (r)
3.30 Word of Mouth
With Gaelic language expert Roddy Maclean (1/6)
4.00 The Briefing Room (9/9)
4.30 BBC Inside Science
5.00 PM
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Icklewick FM
The bin men of Icklewick go on strike (5/6) (r)
7.00 The Archers
Keira tries to make amends
7.15 Front Row
Arts programme
8.00 NatureBang
How animals can use powerful poses to ward off threats (1/5) (r)
8.15 The Media Show (r)
9.00 Loose Ends
Clive Anderson presents the show from the Edinburgh Festivals (r)
9.45 The Cows Are Mad (8/10) (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime:
Mr Sidhu's Post Office
By Amman Brar (9/10)
11.00 Radical
11.30 Everything Is Fake and Nobody Cares (4/6) (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Book of the Week:
All the Beauty in the World (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Radio 4 Extra

Digital only

8.00am The Train at Platform 4 **8.30** Underland **8.45** Breathing Underwater **9.00** Icklewick FM **9.30** Human Hosts **9.45** Daily Service **10.00** Great Lives **10.30** Descendents **11.00** Five Red Herrings **11.30** Kill the Pharaoh! **12.00** Legal, Decent, Honest and Truthful **12.30pm** The Burkiss Way **1.00** The Train at Platform 4 **1.30** Underland **1.45** Breathing Underwater **2.00** Dilemma **2.30** Snap **3.00** The Governor's Consort **4.00** Great Lives **4.30** Descendents **5.00** Five Red Herrings **5.30** Kill the Pharaoh! **6.00** Legal, Decent, Honest and Truthful **6.30** The Burkiss Way **7.00** The Train at Platform 4 **7.30** Underland **7.45** Breathing Underwater **8.00** Dilemma **8.30** Snap **9.00** The Governor's Consort **10.00** Comedy Club: Icklewick FM **10.30** A Look Back at the Nineties **10.55** The Comedy Club Interview **11.00** Fresh from the Fringe **11.30** Sophie Willan's Guide to Normality **11.45** What's the Story, Ashley Storrie?

Radio 5 Live

MW: 693, 909

5.00am Wake Up to Money **6.00** 5 Live Breakfast **9.00** Rima Ahmed **11.00** Gordon Smart **2.00pm** Nick Watt **4.00** Drive **7.00** 5 Live Sport **7.30** Football: Chelsea v Luton Town (Kick-off **7.30**) **10.00** Laura McGhie **1.00am** Joel Mitchell

talkSPORT

MW: 1053, 1089 kHz

5.00am Early Sports Breakfast **6.00** talkSPORT Breakfast **10.00** Jim White and Simon Jordan **1.00pm** Hawksbee and Baker **4.00** Champions League Drive **7.00** Kick Off: Chelsea v Luton Town (Kick-off **7.30**) **10.00** The Sports Bar **1.00am** Paul Ross

Talk

Digital only

6.00am Jeremy Kyle **10.00** Julia Hartley Brewer **1.00pm** Ian Collins **4.00** Kevin O'Sullivan **7.00** Peter Cardwell **10.00** Andre Walker ft. Ash **1.00am** Paul Ross

6 Music

Digital only

5.00am Chris Hawkins **7.00** Nemone **10.00** Lauren Laverne **1.00pm** Craig Charles **4.00** Huw Stephens **7.00** New Music Fix Daily **9.00** Riley & Coe **11.00** Artist in Residence: Loyle Carner **12.00** New Music Fix Playlist **1.00am** New Album Fix **2.00** Jukebox **3.00** 90s Forever **4.00** 00s Forever

Virgin Radio

Digital only

6.30am The Chris Evans Breakfast Show **10.00** Emma B **2.00pm** Ben Jones **6.00** Will MacDonald **10.00** Goldierocks **2.00am** Steve Denyer

Classic FM

FM: 100-102 MHz

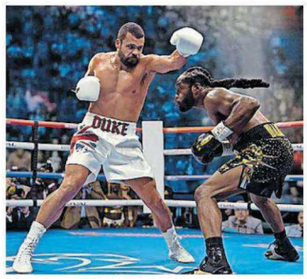
6.30am Dan Walker **9.00** The Hall of Fame Hour **10.00** Aled Jones **1.00pm** Anne-Marie Minhall **4.00** Margherita Taylor **7.00** Relaxing Evenings with Zeb Soanes **10.00** Calm Classics **1.00am** Bill Overton **4.00** Early Breakfast

television

PICKS OF THE DAY

Fightland
Sky Atlantic/Now, 9pm/10.05pm/11.10pm

The rapper 50 Cent is an executive producer of this series, which opens with a flashback prologue. After winning a heavyweight title in Las Vegas, the boxer Duke Kilroy (Howard Charles) attends a party thrown by his crooked manager, Kingsley Marshall (Nicholas Pinnock), has sex with Kingsley's wife and has a fight with his goons that puts him in jail. Seven years later, he emerges thanks to a narco's agent, and returns to London. Tonight's early episodes show him getting a lowly coaching job to infiltrate the Marshall criminal empire, with the aim of taking revenge and sabotaging its operations. The mix of sluggers and drug lords works well, and the action scenes are shot with verve. The problem is Charles, who just doesn't look like a heavyweight champ. **John Dugdale**



Howard Charles as Duke Kilroy, left, in Fightland

Dragons' Den
BBC1, 8pm

At 23 series in, there is now the distinct feeling that what the veteran dragons want is a quiet life, one where they can pat themselves on the back for being nice to flop-sweating entrepreneurs rather than turning their business plans to ashes. Even guests brought in to liven things up (tonight, Gary Neville) only succeed in persuading everyone to collaborate nicely. One rather longs for the days when greed was good and Peter Jones was bad. **Helen Stewart**

Ludwig
BBC1, 9pm

As family and friends take part in a ceilidh after a wedding at a stately home, a male intruder approaches the dancers. Apparently intent on confronting one of them, he's bleeding from his midriff and dies amid the guests (including characters played by Gary Beadle and Michelle Greenidge). With 30-

BBC1

6.00am Breakfast
9.30 Morning Live Top Tips and Best Bits
10.30 Garden Rescue (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer (AD)
12.15pm Bargain Hunt (r)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing. Jacqui Joseph finds a Bentwood chair frame, that has been victim to woodworm, to upcycle
2.45 Escape to the Country. A buyer looks for a new home in Suffolk (r)
3.30 The Repair Shop. The team repairs a large plush hound dog given to the Elvis fan club by the singer's manager Colonel Tom Parker, a Cypriot shepherd's bag and a sewing machine from the 1980s (r) (AD)
4.30 The Answer Run. Quiz show (r)
5.15 Pointless. Quiz hosted by Alexander Armstrong and Nish Kumar (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

7.00 The One Show Lauren Laverne and Angellica Bell present the live magazine show

7.30 EastEnders Alfie's surprise soon turns to chaos, and Suki threatens legal action when Ria is injured (AD)

8.00 Dragons' Den Pitches include nut-and-seed-based snacks, a gadget for tackling water waste and a vision for upscaling a mural installation business. *See picks of the day* (AD)

9.00 Ludwig When a ceilidh is cut short by an unwelcome guest, John is left in a spin. A murder witnessed by an entire wedding party proves to be quite the puzzle. David Mitchell stars. *See picks of the day* (2/6) (AD)

10.00 BBC News at Ten

10.30 BBC Regional News and Weather
10.40 The Truth About My Murder A murderer who used the Covid lockdown to cover up his crime (4/6)

11.20 The Truth About My Murder The investigation into a fight between neighbours that left one man dead and the other claiming self-defence, and how the pathological evidence led police to the truth. (5/6)

12.00 The Truth About My Murder The investigation into the death of a 20-year-old woman who was said to have died a few hours after being knocked down by a van (6/6) **12.40am** Alan Carr's Picture Slam. With contestants from Bristol, Lisburn and Wolverhampton (r) **1.30-6.00** BBC News

BBC2

6.30am Escape to the Country (r)
7.15 Money for Nothing (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: Celebrity MasterChef. The celebrities work in teams to serve up a three-course meal. (r) (AD, SL)
9.00 BBC News
1.00pm Richard Osman's House of Games. Jessie Cave, Ayesha Hazarika, Simon Hickson and AJ Pritchard take part (r)
1.30 The Edge. Game show (r)
2.15 Do You Know Your Place? (r)
2.45 Animal Park Summer. Hamza Yassin witnesses unique tiger behaviour (r) (AD)
3.30 Serengeti III (r) (AD)
4.30 Vintage Antiques Roadshow. From Chichester Cathedral (r)
5.05 Flog It! From Derbyshire (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games. Jimi Famurewa, Harriet Kemsley, Colin Murray and Sara Pascoe compete (r)
6.30 Great Continental Railway Journeys. In Bayeux, Michael Portillo admires the famous 70-metre-long tapestry (r)

7.00 Today at the Test England v Pakistan. Action from the opening day of the second Test in the three-match series, held at Lord's Cricket Ground in London

8.00 The Big Deal with Steph McGovern The five remaining pairs explore the world of prints and limited editions in Margate, the traditional seaside town that has been transformed into a vibrant art destination. *See picks of the day* (3/6) (AD)

9.00 A House Through Time At the start of the 20th century, the new residents of Calton Hill find themselves wrapped up in bigamy and brutality. David Olusoga presents (3/4) (AD)

10.00 Red Dwarf Rimmer is taken prisoner by the creations of his own mind and is subjected to torture (3/6) (r)

10.30 Newsnight Headline analysis presented by Paddy O'Connell

11.05 Emergency 24/7 The team battles to save a man, whose leg has been severed after being hit by a train, and they question the story of a man with a deep wound who denies being stabbed (2/6) (r) (AD)

12.05am FILM: Dear Evan Hansen (12, 2021) Film adaptation of the Tony and Grammy Award-winning musical about Evan Hansen, a high-school senior with a social anxiety disorder. Starring Ben Platt and Julianne Moore **2.10-3.10** Sign Zone: Brexit — A Very British Civil War (r) (AD, SL)

ITV1

6.00am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning. Celebrity chat, topical discussion and lifestyle features
1.30pm ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal. David Dickinson lands at Aerospace Bristol, where the team set up the dealers' den beneath the wings of the majestic Concorde (r) (AD)
3.00 Deal or No Deal. Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show as another contestant tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order, taking on the Banker for the chance to win a life-changing cash prize (r) (AD)
4.00 Tipping Point. Ben Shephard hosts the arcade-themed quiz in which contestants drop tokens down a choice of four chutes in the hope of winning a £10,000 jackpot (r)
5.00 The Chase. Bradley Walsh presents as contestants from St Helens, Wolverhampton, Northwich and Houghton-le-Spring take on one of the ruthless Chasers (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

7.30 It'll Be Alright on the Night Television clangers featuring Joel Dommett, Romesh Ranganathan and Susanna Reid (AD)

8.00 Emmerdale A wave of shock passes through the village, while Graham continues trying to free himself (AD)

8.30 Coronation Street Sarah fears she has placed Harry in harm's way and Maggie tries to avoid Brian (AD)

9.00 Beat the Chasers Contestants from across the UK take on Jenny Ryan, Anne Hegerty, Shaun Wallace, Mark Labbett, Paul Sinha and Darragh Ennis, hoping to win big money. Bradley Walsh hosts (2/8) (r)

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather; followed by Regional News

10.45 FILM: No Time to Die (12, 2021) James Bond sets off on the trail of an enigmatic villain armed with lethal new technology. Action thriller starring Daniel Craig in his fifth and final outing as 007 (AD)

1.25am Shop on TV 3.00 The Summit. The Mountain's Keeper delivers another brutal message, while Dockers seizes an opportunity for tactical manoeuvring before the climbers scale a vast ice wall (r) (AD, SL) **3.50** Unwind with ITV **5.05-6.00** Deal or No Deal: Celebrity Special (r) (AD, SL)

Channel 4

6.30am The King of Queens (r) (AD)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD)
9.10 Frasier (r) (AD)
11.10 Ramsay's 24 Hours to Hell and Back. Gordon Ramsay tries to improve a Caribbean fusion restaurant in LA (r) (AD)
12.05pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r) (AD)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway. A residential worker and apprentice electrician renovate a house in Chirk, north Wales (r)
2.10 Countdown. With Richie Anderson
3.00 A Place in the Sun. A retired couple call upon Laura Hamilton to help them find the perfect holiday home in the southern Spanish city of Torrevieja (r)
4.00 The Great B&B Challenge. The latest challenge is to host a "happening" (r)
5.00 Château DIY. At Chateau du Puits Es Pratx an outdated guest room is refreshed with some upcycling ingenuity (r) (AD)
6.00 American Pickers. A warehouse in Chicago filled with sports memorabilia (r)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Renovation Rescue Vogue Williams and Luke Mabbott help a couple in West Yorkshire whose renovation project has dragged on for eight years, and are now hoping to finish in time for a family celebration (AD)

9.00 The Murder Detective The team recovers a gun that may be linked to Lyra's murder. When they believe they can put a name to the perpetrator, Murphy launches a series of high-risk operations (2/3) (AD)

10.00 The Never Ending Murder Twenty years on from Nicola's disappearance, new information and a new detective leading the case re-ignite the police's efforts to find Nicola (3/4) (AD)

11.00 The Never Ending Murder Thirty years after Nicola vanished the case has gone cold once more. But then, astonishingly, a man comes forward with new information that could break the case (4/4) (AD)

12.00 Crime Scene Cleaners (r) (AD, SL) **12.55am** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (r) (SL) **1.45** Secret Lives of Gypsy Wives (r) **2.40 FILM: Underwater (15, 2020)** **4.15** A Place in the Sun (r) **4.40** Sunday Brunch (r) **4.55** Couples Come Dine with Me (r) (SL) **5.50-6.30** Countdown (r)

5

6.00am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis
12.45pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright
2.20 FILM: To Kill a Stepfather (PG, TVM, 2023) A woman investigates the death of her stepfather after her estranged mother is arrested for his murder. But not everything is as it seems. Thriller starring Alex Camacho
4.00 Castle. While Beckett is out of town, Castle becomes involved with Detective Slaughter in a case where a hi-tech chip has been stolen and one of Slaughter's informants is murdered
4.55 Love Nature (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Motorhoming with Merton & Webster. Paul Merton and Suki Webster explore Devon, beginning by heading to Dartmoor national park to meet a local guide for a Sherlock Holmes-inspired tour (r)
6.55 5 News Update

7.00 Cycling: Vuelta a España 2026 Rebecca Charlton presents action from stage six of the Grand Tour race, a 177.4km route from Alcossebre to Castellón that featured a category one climb to El Bartolo

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 The Yorkshire Vet Julian Norton performs one of his most challenging and delicate operations ever on Milo, a young girl's hamster, while Matt Smith has an unusual job too — TB testing a couple of badger cubs

9.00 Benidorm Is Murder Dennis and Rosa investigate the death of a wealthy man after a jellyfish incident. Crime drama starring John Hannah and Carolina Bécquer (5/6) (AD)

10.00 Killer at the Crime Scene The death of neuroscientist Autumn Klein, who was rushed to hospital after collapsing. She died several days later and bright red blood samples uncovered this was a murder case

11.05 Fatal First Dates True crime documentary that uncovers the reality behind modern romance, beginning with the case of a Canadian teenager who fell for an English suitor. But as months pass, his behaviour becomes increasingly manipulative and ultimately violent

12.05am Street Cops: Catching the Yobs (r) **1.00** Cruise TV with LoveitBookit (r) **2.00** GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r) **2.50** Castle **3.40** Friends (r) (AD) **4.30** Amazing Railway Adventures with Nick Knowles (r) (SL) **5.25** Entertainment News on 5 **5.35** Paw Patrol (r) (SL) **5.45-6.00** Mixmups (r) (SL)

odd suspects, David Mitchell's John is overwhelmed and initially looks daft in an unusual case where the viewer is better informed than the police team — we can be pretty sure they are making a wrong assumption about how the victim was killed. Meanwhile, Lucy (Anna Maxwell Martin) pursues an interview with Joanne (Sian Clifford) as evidence grows of a covered-up link between the MP, the chief constable and the missing copper James, Lucy's husband and John's twin. **JD**

The Big Deal with Steph McGovern
BBC2, 8pm

Steph McGovern's art apprentices face what Alan Sugar might call a "profit task" in Margate, the seaside town reflected in JMW Turner's skies and revitalised by Tracey Emin, and which today boasts more than 30 galleries and studios. The teams are challenged to schmooze local artists, promising to sell their limited-edition prints, hand-tied textiles and ceramics at a fair, but first they must negotiate how best to split the money. **HS**

STREAMING CHOICE

Leanne
Netflix

In this US live-audience sitcom Leanne Morgan plays the titular Leanne, a Southern mom whose life is upended after her husband leaves her for another woman. The jokes (dating, divorce, the menopause) are rapid-fire, many of them centred on the magnificent Kristen Johnston, who plays Leanne's free-spirited sister, Carol. Now back for a second series, this is unpretentious comedy convenience food prepared to gourmet standard. **Andrew Male**

FILM CHOICE

American Gangster (18, 2007)
Film4, 9.10pm

Denzel Washington's Frank Lucas dresses like a bank manager, acts like a pillar of the community and dominates the East Coast heroin import trade from the late 1960s until the end of the Vietnam War. He's a mild-mannered man who cracks heads like conkers and rages at his staff when they incorrectly try to remove the blood from his alpaca rug by rubbing rather than dabbing. On the other side of the law is Richie Roberts (Russell Crowe), an honest cop in a city where there seem to be as many crooks with badges as there are without. (157min) **Wendy Ide**

BBC4

7.00pm Villages by the Sea. How Devonshire Beer stone was used for the Tower of London (6/10)
7.30 Canal Boat Diaries. Robbie Cumming has problems with ice on the Grand Union Canal (4/4)
8.00 Vasa: The Ghost Ship. A look at the Vasa, a 1628 Swedish Navy ship that sank on its maiden voyage
9.00 FILM: Jaws (12, 1975) A seaside town's police chief has to deal with a giant killer shark preying on tourists. Steven Spielberg's thriller starring Roy Scheider (AD)
11.00 Talking Pictures. Charting the story of Steven Spielberg's aquatic horror classic — *Jaws*
11.45 FILM: Jaws 2 (PG, 1978) Thriller sequel starring Roy Scheider and Lorraine Gary (AD)
1.35am Canal Boat Diaries **2.05** Vasa: The Ghost Ship **3.05am-3.35** Villages by the Sea (SL)

Sky Arts

8.00am Artist of the Year: Masterclass (AD) **9.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **10.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.00** Discovering **12.00** Dickens in Italy with David Harewood **1.00pm** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **2.00** The Alfred Hitchcock Hour (b/w) **3.00** Stories from Tate Britain **4.00** Discovering: Dirk Bogarde **5.00** Portrait Artist of the Year 2023 (AD) **6.00** Tales of the Unexpected **7.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **8.00** Discovering: Richard Attenborough (AD) **9.00** Spymasters: The Great Spy Writers. Cold War storytelling (AD) **10.00** Ian Fleming and the Curse of Bond. The enduring appeal of 007 **11.45** The Directors **12.45am** The Unstoppable Shirley MacLaine. A profile of the actress **2.00-4.00** I Am Patrick Swayze (AD)

More4

8.55am Find It, Fix It, Flog It (AD) **10.00** Four in a Bed **12.40pm** Come Dine with Me (AD) **3.20** Four in a Bed **5.50** Car SOS (AD)
7.55 Grand Designs. Kevin McCloud revisits a home built on an airfield in Strathaven in Scotland (7/7) (AD)
9.00 24 Hours in A&E. A man faces extensive surgery after colliding with a car on his motorbike (AD)
10.00 24 Hours in A&E. A 59-year-old woman is rushed to A&E after collapsing at home with signs of a stroke, while a 28-year-old man with epilepsy arrives after cutting his finger at work (AD)
11.05 999: On the Front Line. Paramedics help a 15-year-old girl trapped in the back seat of a crashed car (3/10)
12.10am 999: On the Front Line **1.15** 24 Hours in A&E (AD) **3.25am-3.55** The Perfect Pitch

Live sport today

Chelsea midfielder Cole Palmer

Live Snooker Wuhan Open
TNT Sports 2, 7am-10
Coverage of the first session of the quarter-finals of the tournament in Wuhan, China

Live Test Cricket: England v Pakistan
Sky Sports Main Event, 10am-6.30pm, Sky Sports Cricket, 10am-7pm
The opening day of the second Test in the three-match series, at Lord's Cricket Ground

Live La Vuelta Men
TNT Sports 1, TNT Sports 3, 1.30pm-5.00
Coverage of stage six of the Grand Tour race

Live EFL Cup: Chelsea v Luton Town
Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports Football, 7.15pm-10.00
(Kick-off **7.30**). Second-round action from Stamford Bridge

Live Super League: Wigan Warriors v Hull Kingston Rovers
Sky Sports Action, 7.30pm-10.15
(Kick-off **8.00**). The match at Brick Community Stadium

Talking Pictures

7.35am FILM: Father's Little Dividend (U, 1951) (b/w) **9.15 FILM: Kill Me Tomorrow (PG, 1957)** (b/w) **10.50 FILM: The Leather Boys (PG, 1964)** (b/w) **1.00pm** The Adventures of Sir Lancelot (b/w) **1.30** The Duchess of Duke Street **2.35 FILM: Operation Diplomat (U, 1953)** (b/w) **3.55** Cinebox Memories **4.00** That's My Boy **4.35 FILM: Train of Events (PG, 1949)** (b/w) **6.20** Strange But True **6.55** The Brothers **8.00** Mark Saber **8.30** The Wheeltappers and Shunters Social Club **9.20 FILM: Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell (15, 1973)** Hammer horror with Peter Cushing **11.15 FILM: Albert RN (PG, 1953)** Second World War drama (b/w) **1.00am-3.50 FILM: Twilight's Last Gleaming (15, 1977)** Thriller

Film4

11.00am Wonder Park (PG, 2019) Animated family adventure (AD) **12.45pm Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs (U, 2009)** Animated comedy with the voice of Bill Hader **2.35 The Story of Robin Hood and His Merrie Men (U, 1952)** Adventure starring Richard Todd **4.15 The Straight Story (U, 1999)** Drama starring Richard Farnsworth **6.30 Hidden Figures (PG, 2016)** Fact-based drama starring Taraji P Henson and Octavia Spencer (AD) **9.00** American Gangster Special **9.10 American Gangster (18, 2007)** Fact-based crime drama starring Denzel Washington and Russell Crowe. *See film choice* (AD) **12.20am Honest Thief (15, 2020)** Crime thriller starring Liam Neeson (AD) **2.20am-4.00 Wildfire (2021)** Drama starring Nora-Jane Noone and Nika McGuigan

BBC3

7.00pm Live Athletics: Diamond League Zurich. The Weltklasse Zurich. Coverage of the 14th and penultimate meeting of the season, held at Letzigrund in Switzerland
9.00 The Catch Up
9.05 Better Date than Never. Sparks are flying for Jack and his date while Charles waits for news on his speed-date matches (6/7) (AD)
9.30 Better Date than Never. Jack and Claire settle into a dreamy gondola ride. Last in the series (AD)
10.00 FILM: 27 Dresses (12, 2008) Romantic comedy starring Katherine Heigl and James Marsden
11.45 Angels of the North. Sammyjo has a busy weekend of christening celebrations
12.15am Angels of the North **2.45** Pobl Bachyn **2.55am-3.55** Better Date than Never (AD, SL)

ITV2

7.30am The Real Housewives of Potomac **8.20** The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills **9.15** The Only Way Is Essex **10.15** Dawson's Creek **11.10** Charmed **12.10pm** Deal or No Deal (AD) **1.10** Celebrity Supermarket Sweep (AD) **2.10** Wheel of Fortune (AD) **3.10** The Only Way Is Essex **4.10** The Real Housewives of Potomac **5.00** The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills **6.00** Celebrity Catchphrase (AD) **7.00** Wheel of Fortune (AD) **8.00** The 1% Club Rollover (AD) **9.00** Romesh Ranganathan's Parents' Evening **10.00** Changing Ends (AD) **10.35** Family Guy (AD) **11.35** American Dad! (AD) **12.35am** Bob's Burgers (AD) **1.30am-2.20** Deal or No Deal. Game hosted by Stephen Mulhern (AD, SL)

ITV3

6.00am George and Mildred **7.05** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **8.05** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **9.10** Agatha Christie's Poirot (AD) **11.30** Heartbeat (AD) **1.40pm** Midsomer Murders (AD) **3.40** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **5.15** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **5.50** Heartbeat (AD)
8.00 Vera. A body is found buried on the Northumberland moors which could be a missing teenager, stirring up tension and suspicion in her nearby rural home town (4/4) (AD)
10.00 Lewis. A young astrophysics professor and his jealous wife are suspected in his student lover's murder (3&4/6) (AD)
11.50 Inspector Morse. The sleuth hunts down an escaped convict. Keith Allen guest stars (AD)
2.00am-2.30 George and Mildred

ITV4

6.00am Football Rivalries **6.20** Made in Britain (AD, SL) **6.50** Magnum, PI (AD, SL) **7.55** Robin of Sherwood **9.00** Boon **10.05** The Professionals (AD) **11.15** Robin of Sherwood **12.15pm** Magnum, PI (AD) **2.20** The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes (AD) **3.30** Boon **4.35** The Professionals. Bodie is framed for carrying out an assassination attempt (AD) **5.40** Minder (AD)
6.45 Sharpe. The soldier is assigned to restore peace in the north of England, where the aristocracy's high-handed ways have led to talk of rebellion. Sean Bean stars
9.00pm-3.45am All Elite Wrestling: All In. The 2025 event, held at Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas, including Jon Moxley v Hangman Adam Page, and Timeless Toni Storm v Mercedes Mone

U&Drama

6.00am Teleshopping **7.15** The Bill **8.10** Doctors **9.20** Classic Holby City **10.40** Casualty (AD) **11.40** The Bill **12.40pm** Classic EastEnders **2.00** Classic Neighbours **3.05** Whitstable Pearl (AD) **4.10** Kingdom **5.20** As Time Goes By **6.00** Last of the Summer Wine **8.00** The Marlow Murder Club. A man is killed at Becks' university reunion (3/6) (AD) **9.00** The Marlow Murder Club. Tensions rise among Becks' friends in the house (4/6) (AD) **10.00** New Tricks. The team investigates the death of an elderly woman (4/8) (AD) **11.20** Luther. The detective's friend is in danger (3/4) (AD) **12.40am** Lovejoy. Drama series **1.50** Sister Boniface Mysteries (AD) **2.50-4.00** You're Killing Me (SL)

Variations

BBC1 N Ireland
10.40pm The Crime I Can't Forget (r) 11.30 The Truth About My Murder 12.15am The Truth About My Murder 12.55 The Truth About My Murder 1.35am-6.00 BBC News

BBC1 Scotland
7.00pm-7.30 River City. Harry is hellbent on revenge and goes on the hunt for Tyler (r) 12.40am Scotcast (r) 1.10 Alan Carr's Picture Slam (r) 2.00am-6.00 BBC News

BBC1 Wales
12.40am Buried with Michael Sheen (r) 1.40am-6.00 BBC News

STV
9.00pm-10.00pm Secrets & Lies: STV Player Presents. Australian thriller (r) 1.25am-3.00 Shop on TV 3.50am-5.05 Unwind with STV

BBC Scotland
7.00pm News at Seven 7.30 Hidden Lives (r) 8.00 Beechgrove Garden 8.30 Our Lives: Speed Without Limits (r) 9.00 Martin Compston's Scottish Fling (r) 10.00 Scot Squad (r) 10.30 Edinburgh Unlocked 11.00 Scotcast 11.30pm-12.00 Growing Up Scottish (r)

S4C
6.00am Cyw 12.00 News 12.05pm Cais Quinnell (r) 12.30 Heno (r) 1.00 Codi Hwyl (r) 1.30 Sgwrs Dan y Lloer (r) 2.00 News 2.05 Prynhawn Da 3.00 News; Weather 3.05 Am Dro! (r) 4.00 Awr Fawr 5.00 Stwnsh 6.00 Cynefin (r) 6.59 News 7.00 Heno 7.30 News; Weather 8.00 Pobol y Cwm 8.25 Gwlad y Basg: Gwilym Bowen Rhys (r) 8.55 News; Weather 9.00 Cyfrinachau'r Great Escape (r) 10.00 Taclo'r Ty (r) 10.30-11.35pm Radio Fa'ma (r)

PBS America

8.00am Weathered: Earth's Extremes **8.35** The World After Stonehenge **9.45** The Normans **11.00** The Wheelchair President **1.00pm** Weathered: Earth's Extremes **1.50** The World After Stonehenge **2.55** The Normans **4.10** The Wheelchair President **6.20** The World After Stonehenge **7.30** The Normans. Stephen Baxter examines the purpose of the Domesday Book **8.50** The Wheelchair President. Part one of two. The cover-up of American president Franklin Roosevelt's failing health **9.50** The Wheelchair President (2/2) **10.50** Once Upon a Time in Northern Ireland. A look at how the police and the army infiltrated paramilitary organisations (4/5) **12.00** The Normans **1.15am-2.00** Weathered: Earth's Extremes

Sky Atlantic

6.00am Urban Secrets (r) **8.00** Billions (r) (AD) **10.15** The Last of Us (r) (AD) **12.40pm** Homicide: Life on the Street (r) **2.20** Billions (r) (AD) **4.25** The White Lotus (r) (AD) **6.35** House of the Dragon (r) (AD) **7.45** House of the Dragon. Rhaenyra's forces converge around Tumbleton (8/8) (r) (AD) **9.00** Fightland. Crime drama starring Howard Charles. *See picks of the day* (1/8) (r) (AD) **10.05** Fightland. Duke improvises to keep his mission on track. *See picks of the day* (2/8) (AD) **11.10** Fightland. Duke turns up the heat on the Marshalls. *See picks of the day* (3/8) (AD) **12.15am FILM: Nightcrawler (15, 2014)** Crime drama starring Jake Gyllenhaal (AD) **2.20** House of the Dragon (r) (AD) **4.40** Sort Of (r) (AD) **5.10am-6.00** Fish Town (r)

Sky Docs

6.00am History of the Sitcom (r) **7.00** Discovering: Matthew Broderick (r) (AD) **8.00** The Directors (r) **9.00** Janet Jackson (r) (AD) **10.00** Branson (r) (AD) **11.00** Juan Carlos: Downfall of the King (r) **12.00** Barbie Uncovered: A Dreamhouse Divided (r) (AD) **1.50pm** My Icon: Heather Watson (r) (AD) **2.00 FILM: Missile from the East (U, 2021)** (AD) **4.00** The Directors (r) **5.00** Discovering: Matthew Broderick (r) (AD) **5.55** Chimp Crazy (r) (AD) **7.00** I Am Raquel Welch (r) (AD) **8.45** My Icon: Denise Lewis (r) (AD) **9.00** My Mom Jayne (r) **11.00 FILM: Val (12, 2021)** Documentary focusing on the daily life of actor Val Kilmer (AD) **1.00am** Escobar by Escobar (r) **5.00am-6.00** Discovering: Matthew Broderick (r) (AD)

U&Yesterday

6.10am Abandoned Engineering (AD) **8.00** Bangers & Cash **10.00** Secret Nazi Bases **11.00** The World at War **12.00** Antiques Roadshow **2.00pm** Bangers & Cash (AD) **4.00** Secret Nazi Bases **5.00** The World at War. Operation Barbarossa **6.00** Antiques Roadshow **7.00** Seven Worlds, One Planet. Life on each of the continents, beginning with Antarctica (1/7) (AD) **8.00** Bangers & Cash. A Mark 1 Astra GTE, a 1964 Trojan and a 1966 Lambretta (AD) **9.00** Dream Car Fixers. Sheldon and Will try to turn a 1976 Triumph Stag into a dream car for a retired head teacher (AD) **10.00** Bangers & Cash (AD) **11.00** Bangers & Cash (AD) **12.00** Bangers & Cash **1.00am** Find It, Fix It, Flog It **2.00-3.00** Abandoned Engineering (AD)

MindGames

Tetonor Fiendish No 704

150	29	154	34
32	240	25	168
156	59	220	44
35	234	31	160

		6	7		10		12	13			24			

When complete, the strip below the grid can be split into eight pairs of numbers. Adding the numbers in a pair gives one of the 16 numbers in the grid. Multiplying them gives a different number in the grid. For example, a 4 and 6 in the strip could be paired to make 10 (4+6) and 24 (4x6) in the grid. Enter each sum below the corresponding number in the grid. The blanks in the strip must be deduced, bearing in mind the numbers are listed in ascending order.

The next Tetonor puzzle will appear on Tuesday

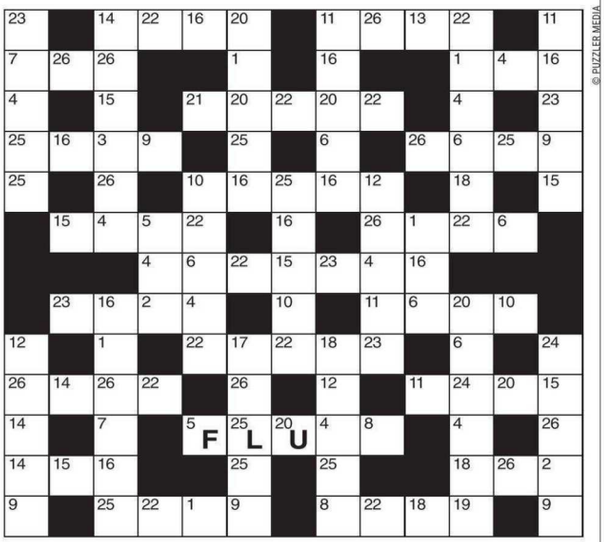
For more puzzles, including Mini Sudoku, extra Codeword, Train Tracks and Futoshiki go to page 10

Winning Move

White to play.
This position is from Lu-Vihaan, Biel 2026.

White has strong pressure along the h-file but how best to exploit this is not immediately obvious. 1 Qh1 looks natural but after 1 ... Rxh6 2 Rxh6 Nxe4 White has no good continuation as the black king can scuttle away via f8. White needs to increase the h-file pressure while preventing the black king's escape. How can this be achieved?

Codeword No 5930



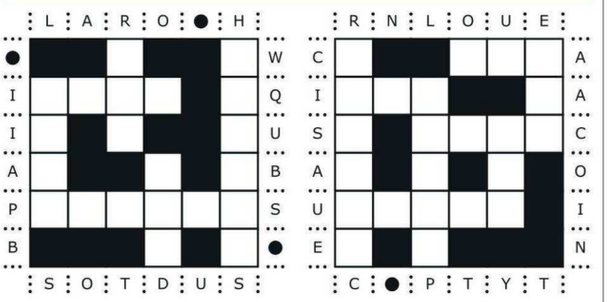
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5 F	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 U	21	22	23	24	25 L	26

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Yesterday's solution, right*

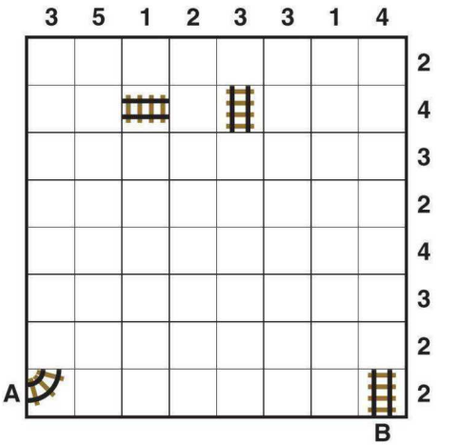
Clueless Stuck on Codeword? To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. If you have an old newspaper and need clues from the past 7 days, call 0905 624 0024. Calls to 0905 cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

Lexica Easy No 9079 Hard No 9080



Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

Train Tracks No 2955



Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Quintagram® No 2657

Solve all five **cryptic** clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Crow and rook inside of sack? (4)

_ _ _ _

2 Break slates sent from the east (4)

_ _ _ _

3 One in aisle maybe pinching good spanner (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

4 Enduring quality those in treatment reported (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Proper kits reordered for intimate game (5,5)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	A	B	B	C	D	E
E	E	E	G	G	I	I	I
K	N	N	O	P	P	P	P
R	R	R	R	S	S	T	T

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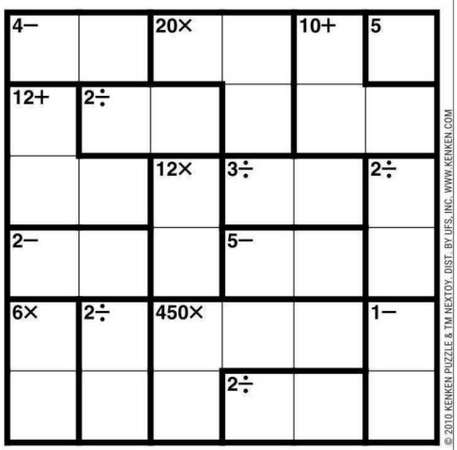
KenKen Difficult No 6922



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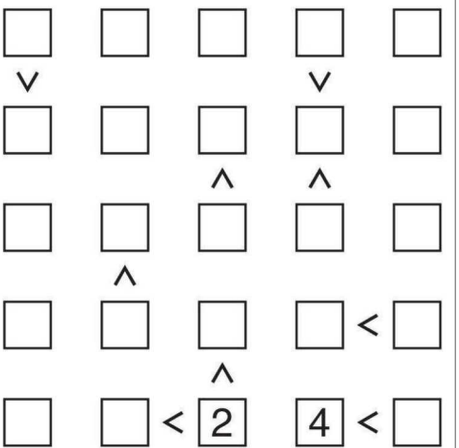
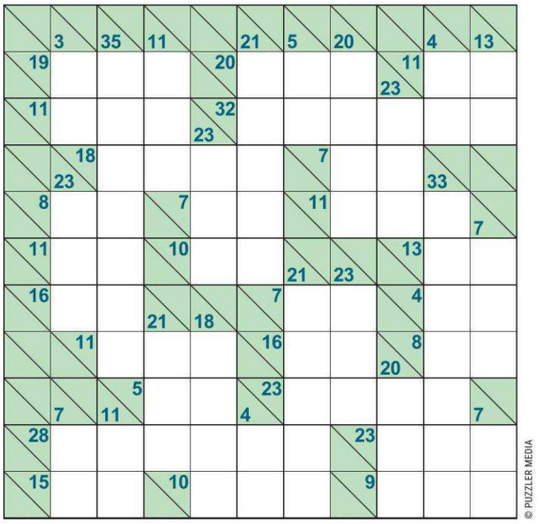
All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Futoshiki No 5470



Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

Kakuro No 4429



Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

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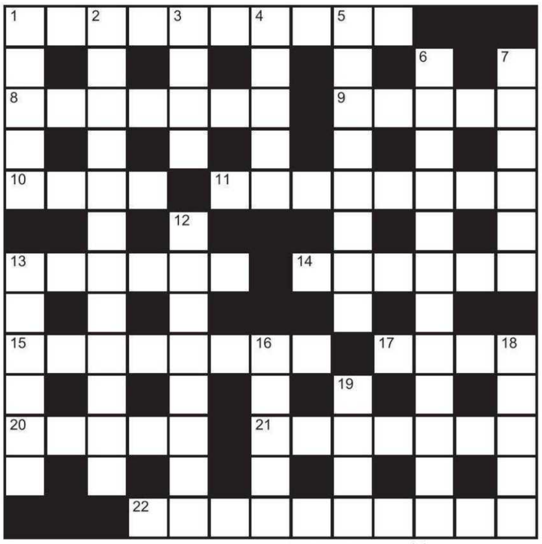
MindGames

times2 Crossword No 10,246



Across
1 Methods for carrying out a skill (10)
8 Reprimand, reprove (7)
9 Italian staple food (5)
10 Even in score (4)
11 Tentative stalemate (5-3)
13 Lay out money for potential profit (6)
14 Punctual (*O, not I*) (2,4)
15 Mentorship (8)
17 Fanciful urge (4)
20 Marie ---, Polish-born scientist (5)
21 Heroism (7)
22 Forerunner of the word processor (10)

Down
1 Implied (5)
2 Glass-panelled home extension (12)
3 Part of speech (4)
4 Chivalric mission (5)
5 Index in mathematics (8)
6 State of total surprise (12)
7 Mystify, confound (6)
12 Ancient and medieval stringed instrument (8)
13 Complete, unbroken (6)
16 Triangular upper part of the wall of a house (5)
18 Town or city dignitary (5)
19 Clement, fine (4)

Solution to Crossword 10,245

Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Brain Trainer

EASY	19	DOUBLE IT	+ 26	1/4 OF IT	+ 9	x 4	÷ 10	TREBLE IT	– 15	1/3 OF IT	ANSWER
MEDIUM	11	SQUARE IT	– 35	DOUBLE IT	+ 132	+1/4 OF IT	÷ 20	SQUARE IT	+ 13	x 4	ANSWER
HARDER	23	x 9	+ 644	DOUBLE IT	+ 1/2 OF IT	– 565	3/4 OF IT	6/7 OF IT	HALVE IT	+ 668	ANSWER

Cell Blocks No 5813

		2			8	
	3	2	4			
			4			
7		9		6		4

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Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Polygon

From these letters, make words of **four** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary,* excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives. **How you rate** 15 words, average; 20, good; 24, very good; 29, excellent

Yesterday's answers

cert, crest, cruet, crump, crumpet, crus, cruse, crust, cure, curse, curst, curt, cusp, cute, ecru, puce, rectum, rectus, scrum, scrump, scum, scup, scut, scute, sect, spec, **spectrum**, spruce, sucre, truce

Set Square No 4432

	+		−		= 5
+	■	×	■	+	
	−		+	1	= 4
+	■	+	■	+	
	×		−	8	= 19
= 15		= 17		= 15	

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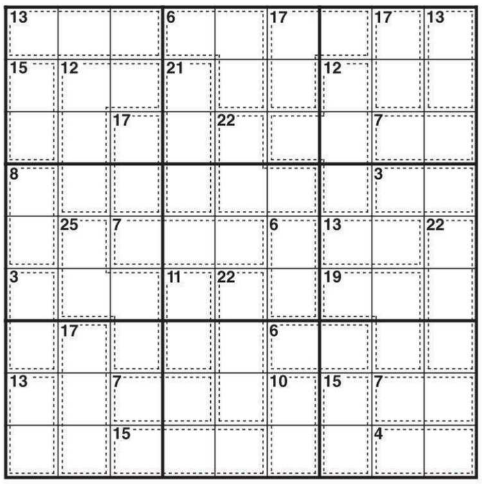
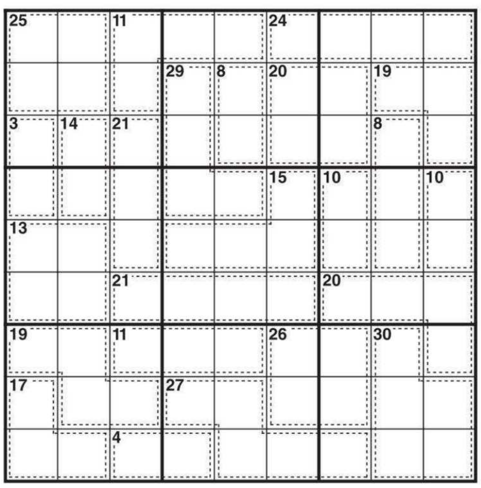
Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

Killer Gentle No 10,898



Killer Tough No 10,899



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge Andrew Robson

Here is an interesting 6♥ from the Alphabet Club at Chalet Campily. As declarer, you win the diamond lead, cash the other top diamond (to eliminate the suit) then draw three rounds of trumps finishing in dummy. At trick six, you lead the four of clubs, East playing the seven and you finessing the queen — all OK so far.

When Adhoc Artie was West, he swiftly beat the queen of clubs with the king — and found himself endplayed. A diamond would give a ruff-and-discard, enabling declarer to discard a spade from dummy and ruff in hand; a spade would give declarer a third spade trick; a second club would promote a trick for dummy's ♣98 and give declarer a third club trick. Slam made.

Brainy Brenda, West, did not beat the queen of clubs with the king, she ducked — smoothly to boot. Very nice defence. Declarer, Careless Claude, returned to dummy's ace of spades and led a second club (the eight) to the jack. However, Brenda could win the king then lead the ten, pinning dummy's nine. Claude could win the ace but Brenda's six of clubs beat her five and the slam had to fail.

"Ah, I think I got a bit careless there," said Claude afterwards. "I think I've been spending too much time on AI development."

Where Deft Derek was declarer and West had also cleverly ducked that club to the queen, Derek crossed to the ace of spades and led the eight of clubs, as Claude had. However, after East played low, he played low from hand (key play). West won the ten but, as happened to Artie above, West was endplayed. Slam made.

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

Dealer: South, Vulnerability: Neither

Teams | Advanced

North: ♠A63 ♥KQ1063 ♦75 ♣984
West: ♠Q1072 ♥J ♦J1084 ♣K1062
East: ♠984 ♥972 ♦Q9632 ♣73
South: ♠KJ5 ♥A854 ♦AK ♣AQJ5

S	W	N	E
2NT	Pass	3♦(1)	Pass
4♣(2)	Pass	4♦(3)	Pass
4♥	Pass	4♠(4)	Pass
4NT(5)	Pass	5♠(6)	Pass
5NT(7)	Pass	6♥(8)	End

(1) Transfer to hearts.
(2) Artificial best break (unrelated to clubs). Jumping to 4♥ would be a less slammy break. [Breaking to 3♠ would show 5♠-2♥ — to get to spades when partner is 3♠-5♥. It's best never to break to 4♦ as there's no retransfer available to right-side 4♥.]
(3) Re-transfer. North must make sure his partner is declarer.
(4) Control bid.
(5) Roman Key Card Blackwood.
(6) Two of "five aces (incl ♥K); plus ♥Q.
(7) Confirming all the keycards in case partner wants to go for a grand slam (in which case, either she can bid it or bid her cheapest king).
(8) No grand slam interest — North moved beyond game only because partner made the best break.

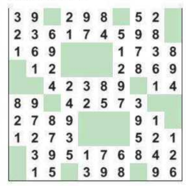
Contract: 4♥, Opening Lead: ♦J

Solutions

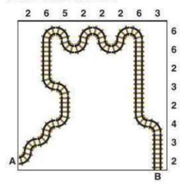
Quick Cryptic 3390

Codeword 5929

Kakuro 4428



Train Tracks 2954



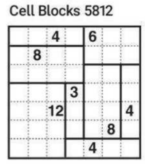
Sudoku 17,055

5	4	2	6	7	8	1	9	3
9	3	7	1	2	5	4	8	6
1	6	8	4	3	9	7	5	2
7	1	4	8	6	3	5	2	9
8	9	5	7	1	2	6	3	4
6	2	3	5	9	4	8	1	7
2	8	1	3	4	6	9	7	5
3	5	6	9	8	7	2	4	1
4	7	9	2	5	1	3	6	8

Sudoku 17,056

9	7	8	2	3	4	1	5	6
5	2	1	6	7	8	9	4	3
3	4	6	1	9	5	2	8	7
7	1	3	4	8	9	5	6	2
8	9	5	7	2	6	4	3	1
4	6	2	5	1	3	8	7	9
1	8	7	3	5	2	6	9	4
2	5	4	9	6	7	3	1	8
6	3	9	8	4	1	7	2	5

Cell Blocks 5812



Set Square 4431

5	+	7	−	8
+	■	+	■	+
9	+	6	×	4
−	■	−	■	+
2	+	3	+	1

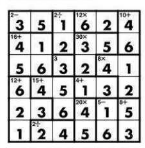
Lexica 9077

Sudoku 17,057

1	7	4	9	6	8	2	3	5
9	8	2	3	1	5	4	7	6
3	6	5	2	4	7	8	1	9
8	4	6	7	2	9	1	5	3
5	1	9	4	3	6	7	2	8
2	3	7	5	8	1	6	9	4
4	9	3	8	7	2	5	6	1
7	5	1	6	9	4	3	8	2
6	2	8	1	5	3	9	4	7

Futoshiki 5469

KenKen 6921



Lexica 9078

Killer 10,896

3	8	6	7	4	9	1	2	5
7	2	5	3	6	1	4	9	8
9	4	1	2	5	8	6	3	7
1	7	9	4	8	6	2	5	3
8	5	3	1	2	7	9	6	4
4	6	2	9	3	5	8	7	1
2	9	4	8	7	3	5	1	6
6	1	7	5	9	4	3	8	2
5	3	8	6	1	2	7	4	9

Killer 10,897

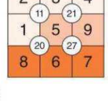
3	8	2	4	9	7	1	6	5
4	9	1	6	5	3	7	8	2
5	6	7	1	2	8	3	9	4
8	3	5	7	6	2	4	1	9
1	2	9	8	3	4	6	5	7
6	7	4	9	1	5	8	2	3
7	1	8	2	4	9	5	3	6
9	5	6	3	7	1	2	4	8
2	4	3	5	8	6	9	7	1

Today's solutions

Concise Quintagram
1 Job
2 Day
3 Shopping
4 Detention
5 Community

Cryptic Quintagram
1 Brag
2 Snap
3 Bridge
4 Patience
5 Strip poker

Sakuro 4831



Brain Trainer
Easy 5
Medium 1,496
Harder 1,307

Word watch

Loden (c) A dark bluish-green colour (*Collins*)
Nephrite (c) A variety of jade (*Chambers*)
Marplot (c) One who hinders a scheme's success (*OED*)

Chess — Winning Move

1 Rh7+! commences a mechanism that allows the white queen to arrive on the h-file with decisive effect: 1 ... Rxh7 2 Rxh7+ Kxh7 (2 ... Kf8 3 Qd6+ Ke8 4 Bc6+ mates) 3 Qh1+ Kg7 4 Qh6 mate

Quiz

1 Courts. It is HM Courts & Tribunals Service **2** Guernsey **3** Cher **4** Taj Mahal **5** Winston Churchill **6** Russia **7** Edward VI **8** Charles I **9** HMS Sheffield **10** William Hogarth **11** Giovanni Boccaccio **12** Double-slit experiment **13** *Verklärte Nacht (Transfigured Night)* **14** Run, specifically a cross-country run **15** Metronome

THE TIMES

27.08.26

MindGames

For extra puzzles See page 10

Word watch
David Parfitt

Loden
a Falsely seduced
b Magnetised
c A dark bluish-green colour

Nephrite
a A narcotic chemical in catmint
b An adherent of an ancient Egyptian cult
c A variety of jade

Marplot
a A red wine of southern France
b A Central American feline mammal
c One who hinders a scheme's success

Answers on page 15

Sudoku

Mild No 17,058

							6	2
7	3		1				4	
			3	4		1		
6			2	1				4
				7		5	8	
8			9	5				1
			7	9		8		
5	7		6				2	
							1	7

Fiendish No 17,059

					4			
	6					7	3	
			1	2				
		3		4		8		
		8	2				7	3
4					3		9	2
	7		3			6		8
	4			5	8			
				7	2	9		

Super fiendish No 17,060

		8					2	
					8	1		
5			2	7				8
		5						
		9			2		3	6
	4			9			5	
	7						8	4
6				2	7	9		
		1		8		3		

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Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz
Olav Bjortomt

1 In England and Wales, HMCTS is responsible for all criminal, civil and family what?

2 A variety of Norman, Guernésiais is the traditional native language of which island?

3 Which "Goddess of Pop" was born Cherilyn Sarkisian in El Centro, California in 1946?

4 Ustad Ahmad Lahori was the main architect of which white marble mausoleum in Agra?

5 Church, the family cat in Stephen King's novel *Pet Sematary*, is named after which British statesman?

GETTY IMAGES

6 Kaliningrad Oblast is the westernmost federal subject of which country?

7 Which Tudor monarch was the first king of England to be raised as a Protestant?

8 Which king was played by Stephen Fry in the 1988 Comic Relief special *Blackadder: The Cavalier Years*?

9 Which Royal Navy destroyer foundered after being hit by an Exocet missile on May 4, 1982?

10 Of which English artist did Charles Lamb write: "Other pictures we look at — his prints, we read"?

11 *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta* is a 14th-century novel by which Italian writer?

12 Thomas Young showed that light acts as a wave in which 1801 experiment?

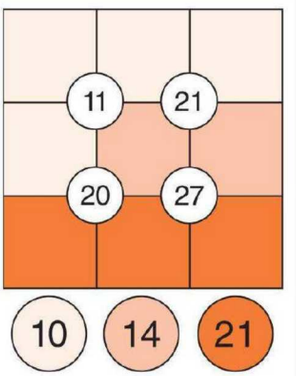
13 Antony Tudor choreographed the 1942 dramatic ballet *Pillar of Fire* to which work by Arnold Schoenberg?

14 The Chapel Bogathlon involves a bog swim, a cross-country cycle and a one-mile what?

15 Which device is pictured?

Answers on page 15

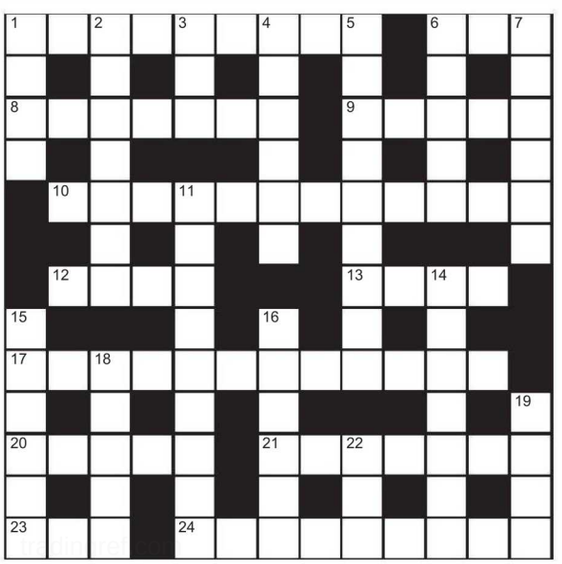
Sakuro
No 4831



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

For interactive puzzles visit thetimes.com

The Times Quick Cryptic
No 3391 by Teazel



Across

1 Reverse direction of boat in isolated place (9)
6 Spring is short in meadow (3)
8 Curious stone mountains (7)
9 The White House seen in the snow? (5)
10 Small-minded policeman who helps captain? (5,7)
12 Conference for example needs quiet attention (4)
13 Sudden great demand for marsh plant (4)
17 Ice ahead: navy organised a farewell wish (4,1,4,3)
20 Younger relative keeping a large room (5)
21 Well, one African country beginning to attack another (7)
23 What is on sale for large amount? (3)
24 Pleased to be in the dark seemingly? (9)

Down

1 One of two presidents of wild country (4)
2 Get back in middle for funeral procession (7)
3 Success as gale finally dropped (3)
4 In theatre, more involuntary shaking (6)
5 Give more support to sides of rare conifer that is unsteady (9)
6 Ring up to reserve one fragrant shrub (5)
7 An interview panel perhaps on train (6)
11 Turk almost outlawed wearing headgear (9)
14 Result of wound perhaps allowed to be red (7)
15 Tool bench is elevated to some extent (6)
16 Showy Christmas decoration is lent out (6)
18 Personal attendant put French article in large tank (5)
19 Free to admit a visit from the police (4)
22 Face something for tea? (3)

Yesterday's solution on page 15

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THE TRAVEL EXPERTS

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Unique ATOL approved Trust Account

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